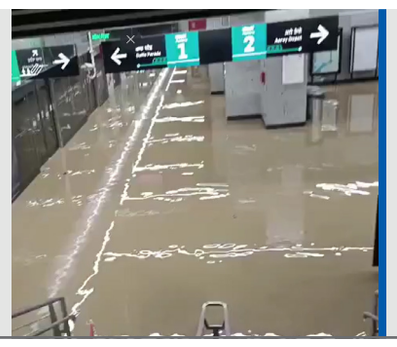
NATION

Mumbai gets highest rainfall in 107 yrs

≫ Page: 4 ≪



BUSINESS

RBI seeks govt nod to lend in rupees to foreign nations

≫ Page: 7 ≪

SPORTS

RCB aims for top two finish, Lucknow for pride

≫ Page: 8 ≪

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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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IMD issues red alert for Coastal K'taka

NDRF deployed, Anganwadi centres closed; Tourists rescued from waterfalls in Dakshina Kannada

MANGALURU, 26 MAY

Heavy monsoon rains continued to lash Karnataka's coastal belt for the third consecutive day on Monday, severely disrupting normal life in Dakshina Kannada district. A red alert has been issued by the India Meteorological Department (IMD) for the next five days, warning of extremely heavy rainfall exceeding 20 cm in 24 hours.

Heavy rainfall is likely to lash Kodagu, Dakshina Kannada, Chikkamagaluru, Udupi, Shivamogga, and Uttara Kannada.

Several parts of Mangaluru city witnessed severe waterlogging and traffic congestion due to overwhelmed drainage systems. Major waterlogging incidents were reported at Kottara Junction, Malemar, and Mahaveera Circle, while other areas like Urva, Matadakani, Kudroli, and Kodialbail West were also inundated. Suburban areas such as Thokkuttu, Goodinabali, Marakada, and Panamburu faced similar issues.

Acting Deputy Commissioner Anand K ordered the closure of all Anganwadi centres in the district on Monday as a precautionary measure. The IMD forecast continued heavy rainfall over the next 48 hours across the coastal region.

People brave rains at Jnanabharathi on Kengeri Ring Road in Bengaluru on Monday **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

Rainfall totals in the past 24 hours exceeded 150 mm in several locations. Bellare in Sullia recorded 200.5 mm, followed by Sarapady in Bantwal and Belandur in Puttur with 190 mm each. Landslides have been reported in hilly areas of the district, and rising river levels in Belthangady have sparked flood concerns.

One NDRF team has been stationed in Puttur, while two SDRF teams have been deployed in Mangaluru and Subrahmanya. Local officials and panchayat development officers have been instructed to remain on high alert and initiate preventive measures. Schools and Anganwadis located in structurally weak buildings are being vacated ahead of reopening.

In a related incident, five tourists were rescued after being stranded atop the Eragundi waterfall in Moodbidri taluk on Sunday. Ignoring local warnings, they had climbed to the top, but rising river levels left them marooned. Locals used ropes to pull them to safety. Fortunately, no injuries were reported. The authorities have urged the public to avoid visiting waterfalls and hilly terrain during heavy rains. Complaints have also been raised about flooding caused by ongoing highway construction, prompting calls for urgent intervention by the National Highways Authority of India. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 2

Girl dies in Belagavi wall collapse

BELAGAVI, 26 MAY:

A four-year-old girl, Keerti, daughter of Nagesh Pujari, died on the spot and her four-year-old sister was injured when a rain-soaked wall collapsed on them while they were asleep in Gokak town early Monday. The incident occurred around 2.30 am in Mahalingeshwar Colony amid heavy monsoon rains. The siblings were sleeping in their home when the wall gave way.

Gokak Town Police confirmed Keerti's death, while her sister was admitted to the government hospital. This marks the first monsoon-related death in Belagavi district this season. *—Salar News*

Mysuru farmer, 2 cows electrocuted

MYSURU, 26 MAY

Relentless rains over the past three days have wreaked havoc in Mysuru and Chamarajanagar districts. A a52-year-old farmer, Siddaraju, and his two cows were electrocuted after a live wire, snapped due to heavy rains and strong winds, fell on his field in Echagalli, Nanjangud taluk, on Sunday.

Siddaraju was reportedly trying to rescue his cows when he was electrocuted.

Meanwhile, heavy rains caused widespread damage — trees uprooted, houses flooded in low-lying areas, and standing crops including maize, paddy, and banana plantations destroyed. Anganwadi centres were shut across both districts on Monday.

SC bins RTI plea for panel report on judge's cash row

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

The Supreme Court administration has rejected a Right to Information (RTI) request seeking access to the report of an apex court-appointed panel that confirmed cash discovery allegations against Justice Yashwant Varma of the Allahabad High Court. The RTI application also requested copies of communications sent by then Chief Justice of India, Sanjiv Khanna, to President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Citing confidentiality and the potential breach of parliamentary privilege, the court declined the request. On 8 May, the court stated that the CJI, as per in-house procedure, had written to the President and Prime Minister, enclosing the committee's 3 May report and Justice Varma's 6 May response. Sources indicated that the panel found credible evidence supporting the allegations. The three-member committee comprised Chief Justices Sheel Nagu (Punjab and Haryana), GS Sandhawalia (Himachal Pradesh), and Justice Anu Sivaraman (Karnataka). The inquiry followed a fire at Justice Varma's Delhi residence on 14 March, after which large sums of cash were allegedly discovered. *—PTI*

Byju's learning app removed from Google Playstore

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

The popular edtech firm Byju's has been delisted from Google Playstore due to unpaid dues to its vendor, Amazon Web Services, according to sources. While some other apps operated by Think and Learn under the Byju's brand remain functional, the core learning app has been removed. A source told PTI that the app's delisting is due to non-payment issues and that its insolvency resolution professional, Shailendra Ajmera, is managing all payments. The app, which offers courses in maths, physics, chemistry, biology, and social studies, as well as preparation for exams like JEE, NEET, and IAS, continues to be available on Apple's App Store. Other Byju's apps, such as Byju's Premium Learning and Byju's Exam Prep, remain accessible on Google Play. The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal has initiated insolvency proceedings against Byju's following appeals from investors, including Glas Trust. *—PTI*

Chitrakala Parishath to host 1st national art festival

BENGALURU, 26 MAY

For the first time, Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath will host Namma Art Bengaluru – Rashtriya Kala Utsava 2025, a five-day national art festival from 28 May. Held in partnership with the state Tourism Department, the event will feature over 100 curated artists from India and abroad. Participants include 51 artists from Karnataka, along with others from Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Delhi, Kerala, and international locations. Entry is free, and artworks will be sold without fixed pricing or commission. Facilities such as artist accommodation and parking have been arranged. The festival will include live painting, talks, and interactive sessions, with renowned speed-painter Vilas Nayak performing. If successful, the event may become an annual fixture in City's March cultural calendar. *—Salar News*

3 more Covid cases in Mysuru; Rao says don't panic

MYSURU/BENGALURU, 26 MAY

Three individuals have tested positive for Covid-19 in Mysuru district, District Health Officer Dr PC Kumaraswamy confirmed on Monday. Two cases were reported from KR Nagara taluk and one from HD Kote taluk. All patients are in isolation, receiving treatment, and recovering well.

Dr Kumaraswamy stated that none of the affected individuals have travel history. Their contacts have been tested and returned negative results. "There is no need to panic," he assured, adding that the current variant is milder than previous ones, causing symptoms such as cough, fever, headache, and throat infection.

He emphasised the need to follow Covid-appropriate behaviour — wearing masks, maintaining hygiene, using sanitiser, and eating immunity-boosting foods — especially as cases tend to recur during May to July.

Meanwhile, Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao said the State is monitoring the situation but sees no immediate cause for concern. "There are 47 active cases Statewide. All are mild, in-home isolation, and none require oxygen or ventilator support," he told reporters in Bengaluru. RT-PCR test kits are being dispatched to all district and medical college hospitals. However, testing will only be done when necessary, and no mass testing is planned. Rao reiterated that no restrictions are being imposed, though high-risk individuals should exercise caution. Schools remain unaffected for now, with decisions to be made after observing the situation over the next few days. He also clarified that dengue prevention measures are underway across the state, with Bengaluru accounting for 50 per cent of dengue cases. *—Salar News*

>>>More on Page 4

Main roads and service roads to be merged: DKS

BENGALURU, 26 MAY

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Monday confirmed that service roads would be merged with main roads along the under-construction metro lines to enable smooth traffic flow. Shivakumar was inspecting the Ring Road stretch between Hebbal junction and Silk Board where the service roads are proposed to be merged with main roads. It was decided in a recent meeting of the Greater Bengaluru officials to merge service roads with main roads by removing the dividers to enable smooth traffic flow. The DCM had also held discussions with several city MLAs and a decision was taken to merge the service roads and main roads in 40-50 km stretch. *—Salar News*

NIA ARRESTS CRPF PERSONNEL SPYING FOR PAK SINCE 2023

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has arrested a CRPF personnel for allegedly spying for Pakistan, officials said on Monday.

The accused, Moti Ram Jat, was actively involved in espionage activity and had been sharing classified information related to national security with the Pakistan intelligence officers (PIOs) since 2023, they said.

Jat, an assistant sub inspector with the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), was receiving funds from the PIOs through various conduits, officials said.

The anti-terror agency has arrested Jat from Delhi and is interrogating him, they said.

Meanwhile, the CRPF said it has dismissed him from the service.

Jat came under the scanner in the course of close monitoring of his social media activity by the CRPF, in coordination with the central agencies, during which he was found to have "acted in violation of established norms and protocols," according to a statement issued by the CRPF.

He was handed over to the NIA for further inquiry, it said.

"Concurrently, the individual has been dismissed from service with effect from 21.05.2025, under the relevant provisions of the Constitution of India read with the CRPF Rules," the statement said.

Jat was produced before a special court here which has remanded him to the NIA custody till 6 June

YouTuber Jyoti sent to judicial custody

Haryana court remanded YouTuber Jyoti Malhotra to judicial custody after the end of her police remand. Malhotra was among the 12 people arrested from Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh over the past three weeks on suspicion of espionage. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

Home alone woman killed in Bengaluru, gold stolen

BENGALURU, 26 MAY

A 40-year-old woman was found murdered in her residence on Dargah Road in Cottonpet on Monday afternoon, with gold jewellery and cash worth Rs 20 lakh stolen. The victim, Latha, was alone at home at the time of the incident, which police believe occurred around 12.15 pm.

Latha, the wife of Prakash, a wholesale cloth merchant, was preparing for her daughter's upcoming wedding. The stolen valuables, comprising mostly gold ornaments, were reportedly collected over time for the occasion. The couple's daughter, a software engineer, was at work, and their son was at school during the crime.

The incident came to light when Prakash returned home for lunch and found Latha dead. Police suspect she was strangled before the house was looted.

The house, a rented property in central Bengaluru's Cottonpet area, showed no immediate signs of forced entry. Investigators are exploring the possibility of involvement by someone known to the family.

Cottonpet Police have registered a case and launched a detailed investigation. CCTV footage from the vicinity is being examined, and acquaintances of the family are being questioned. *– Salar News*

POCSO case against Brij Bhushan closed

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

A Delhi court accepted the closure report submitted by Delhi police, requesting the cancellation of a sexual harassment case filed against former Wrestling Federation of India chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh.

On 15 June, 2023, the Delhi police had filed a report seeking the case's cancellation after the girl's father made a shocking claim midway through the investigation. He claimed that he had made a false complaint against Singh as he wanted to get back at Singh for injustice towards the girl. *—Agencies*

IN MANDYA

Child falls off bike, dies during police checking

MANDYA, 26 MAY

A three-year-old girl named Hrithiksha died in a road accident during a traffic police document check in Mandya on Monday, triggering widespread protests and the suspension of three Assistant Sub-Inspectors (ASIs).

The incident occurred near Nanda Circle in Swarnasandra when Hrithiksha's parents, Ashoka and Vani from Goravanahalli in Maddur taluk, were rushing her to a hospital in Mandya after a dog bite. While en route, their two-wheeler was intercepted by traffic police for not wearing helmets during a routine verification drive.

Though the couple informed police of the medical emergency, and were allowed to proceed, another vehicle brushed past their bike shortly after. Hrithiksha fell off and was run over by a truck, dying on the spot from severe head injuries.

Following the incident, angry locals and the victim's family staged a protest at the site, accusing police of negligence and unnecessarily delaying an emergency. The protest led to traffic congestion and drew the attention of political leaders, including BJP's Induvalu Sacchidananda.

The public demanded justice and compensation for the grieving family, stressing that the enforcement of traffic rules should not come at the cost of human life, especially during medical emergencies. Police have since cleared the protest site and resumed normal traffic. The suspended cops are: Jayaram, Nagaraj and Gururaj *—Salar News with Agencies*

CO-FOUNDER TO SELL 3.4% STAKE IN INDIGO FOR RS 6,800 CR

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

Rakesh Gangwal, co-founder of IndiGo and promoter of InterGlobe Aviation, along with his family trust, is set to offload up to 3.4 per cent of the airline's shares, valued at approximately Rs 6,831 crore (£803 million). The stake sale, scheduled for 27 May, will involve the sale of up to 1.32 crore equity shares at a floor price of Rs 5,175 per share, representing a 4.5 per cent discount on Monday's closing price of Rs 5,420.

The transaction is entirely secondary, with no new shares issued, and will be executed through multiple tranches on BSE and NSE. Goldman Sachs, Morgan Stanley, and JP Morgan are acting as placement agents. Currently, Gangwal and his family trust hold around 13.5 per cent in IndiGo. The sale follows Gangwal's divestment of his stake since a fallout with co-founder Rahul Bhatia over governance issues. *—PTI*

Three held after rave party raid in Devanahalli

BENGALURU, 26 MAY

In a follow-up to a raid conducted on Sunday, rural police have arrested three individuals in connection with a rave party held at a farmhouse near Devanahalli. Police detained thirty-one attendees, all of whom underwent medical tests, including blood analysis, before being released on station bail with notices issued. Authorities revealed that the farmhouse, located near Kannamangala, had been rented under the guise of a birthday celebration but was instead the site of a raucous rave with rampant drug use. During the early morning raid, police seized substances, including ganja and cocaine. Revelers were reportedly found dancing while under the influence of narcotics. A notice has been served to a resident of Shivajinagar, believed to be the owner of the farmhouse. *—Salar News*

Two dead in separate road accidents in City

BENGALURU, 26 MAY

Two men lost their lives in distinct road accidents on Monday, as a combination of persistent rain and negligent driving rendered the City's roads perilous. In the first incident, Anil Kumar, a 38-year-old resident of Hebbagodi, died after his motorcycle collided with a moving canter truck near the NICE Road bridge in Ullal at approximately 10.15am. Authorities said that Anil was riding at high speed and failed to notice the truck after navigating a turn. In a separate incident, 19-year-old Praveen, a resident of Magadi Road, was fatally struck by a goods vehicle around 4pm near 10th Cross on Magadi Road. The driver, Mohammed Ali, 40, was allegedly driving recklessly. Local residents intervened, detaining him until the police arrived. The vehicle was seized, and Ali arrested. *—Salar News*

Chamarajanagar cops bust gang of four burglars

MYSURU, 26 MAY

Chamarajanagar District police busted a gang of four burglars involved in targeting isolated houses in Chamarajanagar, on Monday. Police recovered stolen items valued at Rs 42.25 lakh, including 418gm gold ornaments, 2kg silver ornaments, a Rs 2 lakh camera and a bike from them. The accused were Devaraju, Deepunayak, Arjuna, and Avinash. They used to operate from 11am and rob the houses that were locked, after learning that the owners were out. Deepunayaka, a milk vendor, used to collect information of the houses, and pass it to main accused Devaraju. *—Salar News*

Yakshadhruva Patla fest returns to M'luru on 1 June

MANGALURU, 26 MAY

Karnataka Minister for Kannada and Culture, Shivaraj Tangadagi, will inaugurate the Yakshadhruva Patla Dashama Sambhrama 2025 and National Art Convention in Mangaluru on 1 June. Organised by the Yakshadhruva Patla Foundation Trust, the day-long event 9.30am–11.00pm will feature Indian classical art forms, Yakshagana performances, and a traditional art photography exhibition. Sixteen senior artistes will receive the Yakshadhruva Kala Gourava awards. Scholar Kuriya Ganapathi Shastri will be honoured with the Yakshadhruva Patla Award, while Harish and Chandrika Shetty will receive the Mathuposaka Award. Special guests include Sri Vishwaprasanna Tirtha Swamiji, Deputy CM DK Shivakumar, and cricketer Rohit Sharma. *—PTI*

BENGALURU BRAVES RAINY BLUES AND TRAFFIC WOES

BBMP Chief asks workers to desilt stormwater drains

BENGALURU, 26 MAY

Light to moderate showers lashed the City on Monday morning, causing traffic snarls during peak hours and adding to a week of persistent rainfall. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has warned that heavier downpours are likely over the next few days, with thunderstorms and gusty winds expected.

The IMD has forecast steady rainfall and overcast skies until 31 May. Temperatures are expected to range between 20°C and 27°C until 27 May. On 28 and 29 May, heavier rain could push the minimum temperature down to 19°C. The final two days of the month will likely see continued rain and cooler weather between 20°C and 26°C. Winds may reach speeds of 40–50kmph during intense spells.

In preparation, BBMP Chief Commissioner M Maheshwar Rao chaired a monsoon preparedness meeting on Monday during which he directed zonal officers to ensure stormwater drains are desilted and cleaned, and to take preventive steps in areas lacking retaining walls.

Of 210 flood-prone spots in the city, 166 have reportedly been addressed; interim measures are being taken at the remaining 44, Rao said.

Other key directives include installation of sluice gates in lakes, clearing fallen trees during storms, shifting roadside garbage transfer points, and improving pedestrian pathways.

People in the morning showers at Jnanabharathi, Kengeri Ring Road, on Monday **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

"In lakes with sluice gates, water levels should be reduced in advance to accommodate rainwater. Plans must be prepared to gradually install sluice gates in the remaining lakes and to desilt those that have not yet been cleaned," he said.

As part of flood mitigation efforts, sluice gates have already been installed in 13 of the 183 lakes within BBMP limits, said the Chief Commissioner. Observing that even addressing minor footpath issues can greatly enhance pedestrian mobility, Rao instructed zonal officials to take up the task.

Regarding the comprehensive survey of Scheduled Castes, zonal commissioners from all eight BBMP zones have been tasked with expediting the process.

— Salar News with Agencies

MOUNTING TROUBLE

ED attaches ₹26 cr assets of ex-Bhovi corp officials

NEW DELHI/ BENGALURU, 26 MAY

The Enforcement Directorate on Monday said it has attached assets worth more than Rs 26 crore of two former Karnataka Bhovi Development Corporation (KBDC) officials as part of a money laundering investigation into alleged financial irregularities in the State-run department.

The KBDC works for the welfare of the persons belonging to the Bhovi scheduled caste.

The attached properties belong to BK Nagarajappa, a former general manager of KBDC, R Leelavathy, an ex-managing director of the body, and some other accused.

A provisional order has been issued under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) to attach the assets that are worth Rs 26.27 crore but have a current market value of Rs 40 crore, the central agency said in a statement.

Nagarajappa and Leelavathy were arrested by the ED in April as part of this investigation and they are currently lodged in jail under judicial custody.

The ED alleged that the two officials, in connivance with middlemen and their associates, "misappropriated" the funds by sanctioning the loans, subsidies and financial assistance to the bank accounts of more than 750 "fake" beneficiaries, which were "fraudulently" opened by them.

- The money laundering case stems from multiple police FIRs filed on charges of 'misuse and diversion' of funds worth Rs 97 crore from the KBDC

The amounts were "diverted" to the bank accounts of various entities like Adithya Enterprises, Somanatheswara Enterprises, New Dreams Enterprises, Harntiha Creations and Annika Enterprises.

The money laundering case stems from multiple police FIRs filed on charges of "misuse and diversion" of funds worth Rs 97 crore. *—PTI*

City lawyer challenges Saleem's appointment as DG&IGP

BENGALURU, 26 MAY

A City-based advocate issued a legal notice challenging the appointment of Dr MA Saleem as the Director General and Inspector General of Police (DG&IGP) "In-Charge" of the State, calling it a violation of Supreme Court directives.

Advocate Sudha Katwa, in her notice dated 26 May, alleged that the State government's order appointing Saleem on 21 May as "In-Charge" DG&IGP flouts key norms set out by the Supreme Court in the "Prakash Singh vs. Union of India (2006)" case. She argued that the apex court had clearly prohibited acting or in-charge appointments, mandating instead a regular appointment through a UPSC-empanelled panel of the three senior most eligible officers.

MA Saleem **PHOTO: SALAR**

Katwa claimed the State did not follow due process — no names were sent to the UPSC, no panel was received, and no justification for an ad-hoc appointment was provided. She warned that the move amounted to contempt of court and undermined the principles of transparent, merit-based selection.

The notice demanded immediate withdrawal of the appointment, initiation of a regular selection process, and warns of legal proceedings if the State fails to act within seven days. *—Salar News*

SC to hear State govt's plea on Palace Grounds case today

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

The Supreme Court agreed to list for hearing on Tuesday a plea of the State government challenging grant of Transferable Development Rights (TDR) certificates to the legal heirs of the erstwhile Mysore royal family in connection with the acquisition of 15 acres of City Palace Grounds.

Initially, a bench comprising Chief Justice BR Gavai and Justice Augustine George Masih asked senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for the State government, as to how it

can review the order passed by another bench.

Sibal clarified that the government was not seeking to overturn the earlier order, but only to ensure that its concerns are properly addressed within the framework of the pending appeal. On 22 May, another bench comprising Justices MM Sundresh and Aravind Kumar had directed the State to issue TDR certificates worth Rs 3,011 crore to the royal heirs in a contempt proceeding. However, Sibal said the TDR, introduced through a 2004 amendment to the Karnataka Town and Country Planning Act, cannot be applied retrospectively to land acquired in 1996 under the Bangalore Palace (Acquisition and Transfer) Act. *—PTI*

Ashoka blasted the Congress for the garbage tax, with the cess for a 30x40 ft house increased from Rs 120 to Rs 720 **PHOTO: ANI**

Looting through garbage tax: Ashoka flays Cong

BENGALURU, 26 MAY

The Congress government is looting people in City under the guise of a garbage tax, making the entire City unaffordable, Opposition lead R Ashoka alleged.

Speaking at a press conference, he said that the State government has no funds left and Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has imposed taxes even Tughlaq wouldn't have dared to.

He blasted the Congress for the garbage tax, with the cess for a 30x40 ft house increased from Rs 120 to Rs 720, or a 500 per cent hike, he claimed.

Ashoka also criticised Siddaramaiah for skipping the NITI Aayog meeting while finding time for Congress meetings in Rajasthan and to meet Rahul Gandhi. "Siddaramaiah has time to eat samosas and kachoris but not to engage with the central government." *—Salar News*

Corruption was rampant in KSDL under BJP: MB Patil

BENGALURU, 26 MAY

State's Large and Medium Industries Minister, MB Patil, that Karnataka Soaps and Detergents Limited (KSDL) was in dire straits under the previous administration due to corruption, but is now thriving. He noted production has surged by 40 per cent, with profits increasing from Rs 152 crores to over Rs 400 crores since his tenure began.

"BJP leaders are making loud statements (about the appointment of Tamannaah). But where were these leaders when large-scale scams occurred under the chairmanship of Madal Virupakshappa (then a BJP MLA)?" Patil asked. "Did State BJP president BY Vijayendra have a share in those irregularities?"

- Patil said BJP leaders were making loud statements about Tamannaah, but were quiet when large-scale scams happened in KSDL under them

The appointment of actress Tamannaah Bhatia as KSDL's brand ambassador was met with criticism, particularly from pro-Kannada activists, although Patil defended the decision as part of a strategy to enhance the brand's presence across India.

He accused the same leaders, who now portray themselves as protectors of State's entrepreneurial heritage, of remaining silent when Virupakshappa was jailed on corruption charges related to KSDL.

He also voiced concerns regarding Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu's reported push to relocate Hindustan Aeronautics Limited's (HAL) Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA) and Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) production from Karnataka to Andhra Pradesh, labelling it as "inappropriate and worrying." Patil plans to meet with Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to advocate for a defence industrial corridor in State, underscoring the state's significant contribution to the aerospace and defence sector, which accounts for 65 per cent of India's total output. *—PTI/ANI*

Budding doc dies in car crash on expressway

KOLAR, 26 MAY

A doctor-in-the-making was killed on the spot when his car hit the median on the Bengaluru–Chennai expressway near Siddanahalli village, in Kolar, early on Monday. The deceased Krishna Jagan, 24, was doing his internship at the PES Medical College, Kuppam, in Chittor district.

This comes close on the heels of another road accident on the same stretch near Anepura on Sunday evening when KGF resident Pushpalatha, 75, was killed on the spot and her son Manjunath sustained grievous injuries and was hospitalised.

Sources said that Krishna Jagan, a resident of Indiranagara in Ananthapur district of Andhrapradesh, completed his MBBS course at the PES Medical College and was working as an intern in there. *—Salar News*

FIRST BATCH IN 26 AUG

University of Liverpool soon in City

BENGALURU, 26 MAY

UK's University of Liverpool is set to open a campus in City and will welcome first batch of students in August next year, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan announced on Monday as he handed over the Letter of Intent to the varsity administration.

The move comes after the University of Liverpool, part of the UK's prestigious Russell Group, received a formal approval from the University Grants Commission (UGC) to open the first foreign university campus in City.

"University of Liverpool is the fourth foreign university to publicly announce its presence in India. By this academic year, 15 foreign universities will be coming to India," Pradhan said.

Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, Professor Tim Jones, Vice-Chancellor, University of Liverpool and Vineet Joshi, Interim Chair, UGC at the Letter of Intent hand-over ceremony, in New Delhi, Monday **PHOTO: PTI**

The City campus will initially offer programmes in Business Management, Accounting and Finance, Computer Science, and Biomedical Sciences. It will also introduce a programme in Game Design — a unique offering for a UK university campus in India to offer the subject.

It will also create enriching global exchange opportunities, providing UK-based students with an exciting new destination for international study.

University of Liverpool senior leaders also signed memoranda of understanding (MoUs) to explore future collaborative opportunities with companies and organisations including the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG), AstraZeneca Pharma India Limited, Wipro Limited, YouWeCan, and Dream11.

""We look forward to providing talented students with access to an exceptional learning experience and a range of fantastic opportunities." said Tim Jones, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Liverpool. *—PTI*

BJP'S RAVIKUMAR SAYS KALABURAGI DC IS FROM PAK; STIRS ROW

KALABURAGI, 26 MAY

A political storm has erupted in Kalaburagi district. BJP MLC and Chief Whip of the Opposition in the Legislative Council, N Ravikumar, said District Collector Fauzia Tarannum, might have "come from Pakistan".

Addressing a protest rally organised under the BJP's 'Kalaburagi Chalo' campaign on 24 May, Ravikumar alleged that the district administration was functioning under the influence of the ruling Congress.

In a statement that sparked widespread condemnation, he said "Kalaburagi DC office has also lost its independence. The DC madam is also listening to what they (Congress) say. I don't know whether the DC has come from Pakistan or is an IAS officer." Progressive groups and civil society organisations demanded action against him for the "insulting and communal" remarks.

The protest was held to demand the removal of State Minister Priyank Kharge. The demand stems from a 21 May incident in Chittapur-Kharge's constituency-where Congress workers allegedly laid siege to a guest house where Leader of Opposition, Chalavadi Narayanswamy, was staying. *—ANI*

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

ABVP-NSUI clash at DU after Rahul Gandhi's visit

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

Tensions flared at Delhi University's North Campus after ABVP held a protest, culminating in one of its leaders smearing cow dung on DUSU President Ronak Khatri's office. This followed an unscheduled visit by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on 22 May, during which he met SC, ST, OBC, and EWS students. The university claimed the visit disrupted operations and lacked prior approval. ABVP accused Gandhi of creating chaos and NSUI members of misbehaving with a DUSU secretary. ABVP leader Rishab Choudhary later posted a video applying cow dung to Khatri's office, referencing a prior campus controversy. Khatri defended the visit, accusing the Sangh of spreading falsehoods and challenged them to stand up for marginalised students. —*PTI*

Rajya Sabha elections for 8 seats on 19 June

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

The Election Commission has announced biennial polls for eight Rajya Sabha seats — two from Assam and six from Tamil Nadu — scheduled for 19 June. The terms of Birendra Prasad Baishya (BJP) and Mission Ranjan Das (also BJP) from Assam will expire on 14 June. Meanwhile, six members from Tamil Nadu — Anbumani Ramadoss (PMK), N Chandrasegharan (AIADMK), M Shanmugam (DMK), P Wilson (DMK), and Vaiko (MDMK) — will see their terms end on 24 July. The notification for the elections will be issued on 2 June. As per usual practice, votes will be counted on the same evening. These elections will fill the seats vacated by the outgoing members, ensuring representation continues without interruption. —*PTI*

Drama for polls: Tej Pratap Yadav's ex-wife slams Lalu

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

Aishwarya Rai, ex-wife of RJD leader Tej Pratap Yadav, has spoken out following Tej's alleged Facebook confession about a long-term relationship. Aishwarya questioned why Lalu Prasad Yadav, Tej's father, allowed their marriage if they were aware of the circumstances, asking, "Why was my life ruined?" In the post, Tej claimed to be in a relationship for over 12 years, despite his marriage to Aishwarya in 2018. Lalu expelled Tej from the party for six years, citing a lack of moral values. Aishwarya labelled this as a "drama" to mitigate political damage ahead of the Bihar elections, adding that she learned of her divorce via the media. —*PTI*

11 yrs of BJP: PM slams 'hate-filled' Pak

'Anyone who dares to erase the sindoor of our sisters' forehead will surely be eliminated'

DAHOD, 26 MAY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said Pakistan's only aim is to hate India and think of ways to harm it, while our nation has set goals of removing poverty and bringing about economic development.

Addressing a rally in Dahod in Gujarat, the PM hailed Operation Sindoor and said it was not merely military action, but an "expression of India's ethos and feelings".

Twenty-six men were gunned by terrorists in Pahalgam in Kashmir on 22 April, following which India launched Operation Sindoor in the early hours of 7 May, resulting in massive damage to terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir.

"How can India and Modi sit quiet after such a terrorist attack? Anyone who dares to erase the sindoor from the foreheads of our sisters (sindoor is a sign of marriage and its wiping off signifies widowhood) will surely be eliminated," he said to the huge cheering crowd.

Terrorists may not have imagined in their wildest dreams how difficult it would be to fight against Modi, the PM said.

Family members of Army officer Colonel Sofiya Qureshi shower flower petals on Prime Minister Narendra Modi as he waves at supporters during a roadshow in Vadodara, Gujarat, on Monday *PHOTO: PTI*

He said the action was part of the responsibility citizens of the nation gave him when they made him "pradhan sevak" on 26 May, 2014.

Modi gave a free hand to the three wings of the country's armed forces and its warriors did what the world had not seen for the last several decades, Modi asserted.

Tearing into Pakistan, the PM said, "The country that came into existence after Partition lives on hatred for India. It only wants to harm Bharat. However, India's goals are to remove poverty, bring about economic development and become a developed nation."

"Our government's policy is to take development to areas that have remained backward," he added.

He also urged people to buy and use products made in India during festivals like Holi, Diwali and Ganesh Puja.

He was speaking at a rally after launching development projects costing Rs 24,000 crore, including a locomotive manufacturing plant, here. – *PTI*

"26 May 2014 -In 11 years, by turning big 'promises' into 'empty claims', the Modi government has ruined the country in such a way that the promise of 'achche din' has now proven to be a 'nightmare'. Every section of 140 crore people is troubled. This has been the lotus symbol in the last 11 years!!

-Mallikarjun Kharge, Congress President

$5B ANNUAL TRADE TARGE

Pak, Turkiye strengthen ties after India boycotts them

ISLAMABAD, 26 MAY

In a significant development, Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif met with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan during a two-day visit to Turkey, where they reviewed their comprehensive bilateral relationship and expressed a commitment to enhancing their strategic partnership.

Sharif's visit is part of a four-nation tour that also includes stops in Iran, Azerbaijan, and Tajikistan. state broadcaster PTV News reported that two leaders held delegation-level discussions, focusing on key sectors such as renewable energy, information technology, defence production, infrastructure development, and agriculture for potential joint ventures and increased investment.

They reiterated their aim to achieve a USD 5 billion annual trade target, previously agreed upon. "We reviewed the ongoing progress of our multifaceted bilateral engagements, particularly in trade and investment, reaffirming our determination to strengthen these unshakeable bonds of brotherhood and cooperation," Sharif stated on X.

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan *PHOTO: X/ Shehbaz Sharif*

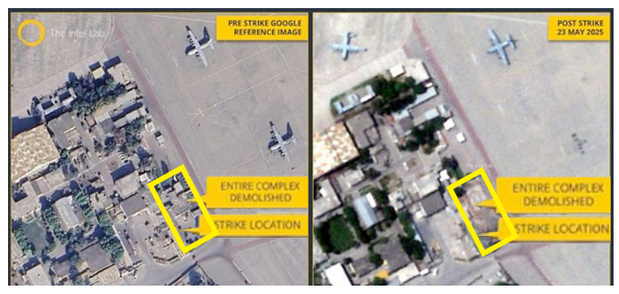
PM also expressed gratitude to Erdogan for Turkey's support during Pakistan's recent military confrontations with India, which flared up following an attack in Pahalgam on April 22 that led to significant casualties. Escalating tensions saw both nations conduct military actions, but hostilities were brought to a halt following diplomatic talks on 10 May.

Accompanying Sharif were Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, and Minister of Information Attaullah Tarar. The meeting was described as "warm and most cordial," underscoring the historic and brotherly ties between Pakistan and Turkey, rooted in shared values and a common vision for progress. – *PTI*

HC halts MIAL's decision on ground services

MUMBAI, 26 MAY

The Bombay High Court on Monday issued an interim order restraining Mumbai International Airport Limited (MIAL) from making a final decision on tenders to replace Turkish firm Celebi for ground and bridge handling services. This follows Celebi's subsidiary challenging the revocation of its security clearance by Bureau of Civil Aviation Security, citing national security concerns amid political tensions over Turkey's support for Pakistan during Op Sindoor. The court will hear the petitions after June. Meanwhile, similar cases have been filed by Celebi's other subsidiaries in Delhi HC against contract cancellations at Delhi airport. – *PTI*



New statellite images show the significant damages to Pakistan Air Force Nur Khan airbase in Rawalpindi during Op Sindoor *PHOTO: X*

Op Sindoor halted after DGMO talks: EAM clarifies US role

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Monday addressed a parliamentary panel, clarifying that Pakistan's Director General of Military Operations (DGMO) was notified about Indian strikes on terrorist camps only after the operations were executed. This statement seeks to rebut allegations made by the Congress Party, including Rahul Gandhi, suggesting that he had forewarned Pakistan.

Jaishankar explained that he never engaged in conversations with Pakistan, nor was there any US interference in the decision-making process regarding military actions. He confirmed that the decision to cease Operation Sindoor was taken following a request from the Pakistani DGMO to halt hostilities. He reiterated that any communication between the two nations was limited solely to their respective DGMOs. During the Consultative Committee on External Affairs meeting, Jaishankar highlighted that while US had encouraged dialogue between India and Pakistan, India firmly maintained that talks could not proceed alongside terrorism. He pointed out that the strikes had significantly impacted the morale of Pakistani forces.

The Minister called for cooperation among all MPs to collectively expose Pakistan's actions on a global stage, noting the government's initiative to send multi-party delegations abroad to underscore India's united stance against terrorism.

Congress members expressed concerns about the perceived "hyphenation" of India and Pakistan by US, alongside issues related to Pakistan's growing ties with China. siscussion also touched on Pakistan's request for IMF aid and India's abstention during discussions. – *PTI*

Delegation briefs think tanks in France

DOHA, 26 MAY

BJP leader Ravi Shankar Prasad led a closed-door discussion with representatives of leading think tanks in France on Monday at the start of his all-party delegation's visit to Paris.

The former Union minister is leading a nine-member delegation to France, the first stop in a six-nation tour covering European capitals to highlight India's zero-tolerance stance on terrorism following the Pahalgam terrorist attacks last month.

"France is a strategic partner to India and has strongly condemned the terrible terror attack in Pahalgam, has expressed full solidarity with India and also expressed support for India's fight against terrorism," said Indian Ambassador to France Sanjeev Singla, in his introductory remarks at the meeting.

"In that context, we have the privilege of having with us a very distinguished delegation from India; parliamentarians from the length and breadth of the country, cutting across various domains," he said.

A multi-party delegation led by BJP MP Ravi Shankar Prasad with Indian Ambassador to France Sanjeev Singla, in Paris *PHOTO: PTI*

Earlier, the delegation held a briefing at the Embassy of India in Paris to discuss the key messages to be conveyed during their exchange with think tanks, parliamentarians and community groups in France.

"India wants peace and amity, but not at the cost of the lives of our innocent Indians," Prasad told PTI ahead of the meetings.

"And if in the most barbaric manner Pahalgam happens, there will be a cost to it and the whole world needs to speak in one voice as far as terrorism is concerned. It's a global menace, a global cancer," he said. From France, the delegation heads to Italy and goes on to cover the UK, Germany, Denmark and the European Union (EU). *PTI*

YSRCP LEADER GOVARDHAN REDDY ARRESTED OVER 'ILLEGAL' MINING

NELLORE, 26 MAY

Senior YSRCP leader Kakani Govardhan Reddy was arrested on Monday for alleged "illegal" quartz mining and other offences, police said.

Reddy was picked up by the police from the outskirts of Bengaluru in the intervening night of Sunday and Monday, arrested, and Venkatagiri Court remanded him to 14 days of judicial custody.

Reddy, a former agriculture minister, was allegedly involved in illegal mining in Podalakuru mandal of Nellore district.

Police said Reddy illegally used explosives during the mining activity and hurled casteist slurs at local tribals who confronted him.

Meanwhile, senior YSRCP leader and former minister Merugu Nagarjuna condemned Reddy's arrest. – *PTI*

Ahead of 2026 polls, Gogoi to helm Assam Congress

GUWAHATI, 26 MAY

- Gogoi dismissed the claims as "insane" and "baseless", accusing the Assam CM of behaving like an "IT cell troll" and failing to verify facts.

In a dramatic political twist, Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi has been appointed President of the Assam Pradesh Congress Committee, just as allegations emerged about his British wife's alleged links to Pakistan. The Congress announced Gogoi's elevation on Monday, replacing Bhupen Kumar Borah, and positioning him as the party's likely chief ministerial face for the 2026 state elections.

On the same day, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma claimed that senior Congress leader Ripun Bora had "confessed" that Gogoi's wife, Elizabeth Colburn, had been on the payroll of the Pakistan government. Sarma stated that she travelled between India and Pakistan 19 times and received payments through an international NGO with operations in Pakistan.

Bora, in a press release, acknowledged Colburn's NGO work but questioned whether it should be grounds to question her patriotism, noting many Indians and Pakistanis work legally across borders.

Sarma warned of potential national security threats and said Bora's statement would be formally recorded for further action.

Gogoi dismissed the claims as "insane" and "baseless", accusing the Assam CM of behaving like an "IT cell troll" and failing to verify facts. —*PTI*

DAYS BEFORE INAUGURATION

Statue of ex Ch'garh CM goes missing; dumped in civic office

GAURELA, 26 MAY

A life-size statue of former Chhattisgarh chief minister late Ajit Jogi went missing on Monday from a square in Gaurela-Pendra-Marwahi district where it had been kept for unveiling on 29 May, officials said.

While the incident prompted Jogi's son Amit Jogi to stage a protest at the spot, the statue was later found dumped in the premises of the Gaurela municipality office. The local police have registered a theft case against unidentified persons, said officials.

The statue of Jogi was installed on a platform on the roadside at Jyotipur square in Gaurela town a few days back. It was to be unveiled on 29May, the death anniversary of the state's first CM.

On 22May, the Gaurela Municipal Council had served a notice to the construction firm tasked with building the platform to remove the statue at once.

CCTV footage from the area showed that the statue was removed using an earthmover around 2.30am *PHOTO: X*

CCTV footage from the area showed that the statue was removed using an earthmover around 2.30am.

A case has been registered under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita sections concerning theft and dishonestly taking movable property out of someone's possession without their consent, he said. During a search, the statue was found at the Gaurela municipality office campus. —*PTI*

ED accuses CPI(M) of Karuvannur bank fraud

KOCHI, 26 MAY

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has indicted the ruling Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI(M)) in Kerala in a fresh chargesheet concerning the alleged scam involving the Karuvannur Service Cooperative Bank. This marks only the second instance in which the federal agency has accused a political party under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), following similar allegations against the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) last year.

The ED's supplementary chargesheet, filed before a special PMLA court in Kochi, names a total of 28 entities and individuals, including CPI(M) MP K Radhakrishnan, party MLA AC Moideen, and the party itself through its Thrissur district secretary. The CPI(M) has dismissed the allegations and pledged to fight them legally and politically. The investigation revolves around 16 FIRs filed by the Kerala Police in July 2021, citing alleged irregularities at the CPI(M)-controlled bank, involving approximately Rs 150 crore. The ED claims the proceeds of crime amount to around Rs 300 crore, citing "bogus" and "benami" loans issued by the bank. —*PTI*

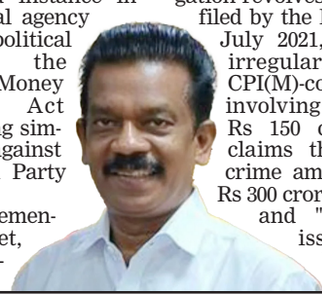


PHOTO: X

Actor Dino Morea quizzed in Mithi river cleaning scam

MUMBAI, 26 MAY
The Mumbai Police's Economic Offences Wing (EOW) interrogated actor Dino Morea on Monday regarding his links to the Rs 65 crore Mithi river cleaning scandal. Morea was summoned to the EOW office after his name emerged during the investigation surrounding financial irregularities tied to the purchase of silt pusher machines and dredging equipment by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC). An official confirmed that Morea is being questioned for alleged connections with two arrested middlemen linked to the scam.
The investigations reveal that fraud was committed through the generation of fictitious bills related to the transportation of sludge out of Mumbai. Earlier this month, two intermediaries, Ketan Kadam and Jayesh Joshi, were taken into custody. *—Agencies*

Ganguly's brother, family survive speedboat capsize

PURI, 26 MAY

Snehasish Ganguly, elder brother of former Indian cricket captain Sourav Ganguly, and his wife Arpita narrowly escaped a perilous situation while participating in water sports at Puri beach. The incident unfolded on Saturday evening near the Lighthouse when their speedboat capsized after being struck by a massive wave. "We were saved by the grace of God. I am still in trauma. This should not happen, and water sports in the sea must be properly regulated," Arpita stated in a video message. She expressed her intention to contact the Puri Superintendent of Police and the Odisha Chief Minister upon returning to Kolkata. The couple, along with other passengers, was thrown into the sea when the boat lost balance. *—PTI*

NEET-aspirant from J&K hangs self in Kota

KOTA, 26 MAY

An 18-year-old NEET aspirant from Jammu and Kashmir killed herself by hanging from a ceiling fan in her paying guest accommodation at Pratap Chouraha. This marks the 15th such incident this year and the second in May. The victim, identified as Zeeshan, reportedly spoke to a relative shortly before her death, expressing her suicidal thoughts. Concerned, the relative contacted another resident, Mamta, who rushed to check on Zeeshan. Upon finding her door bolted from the inside, a local crowd helped break in, only to discover her hanging. Despite being rushed to hospital, she was pronounced dead. Zeeshan had returned to Kota last month to prepare for the medical entrance exam, opting for self-study this time and not enrolled at any coaching institute. *—PTI*

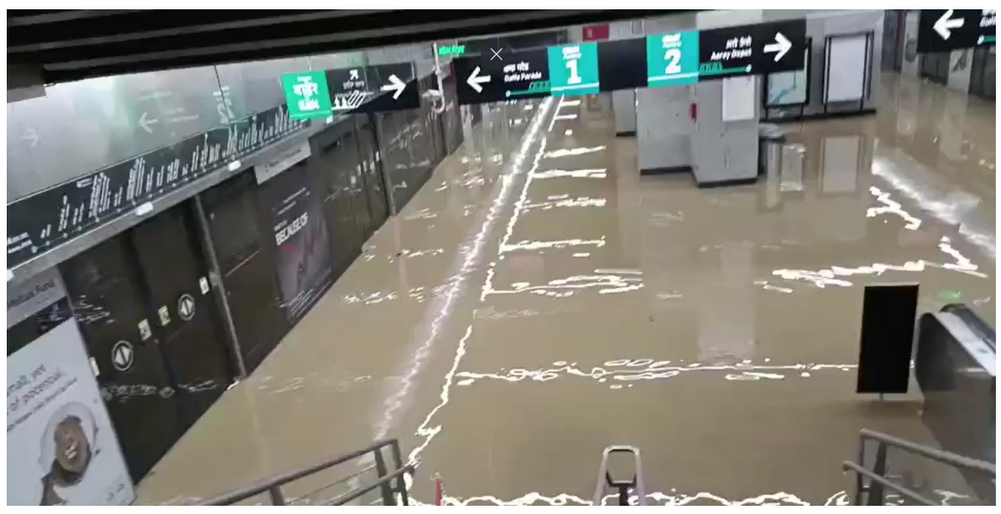
4 killed, 1 injured in car–truck collision in Andhra

KONTHAMURU, 26 MAY

Four people were killed and one seriously injured in a head-on collision between a car and a truck near Rajanagaram in East Godavari district on Monday morning, said an official. Preliminary investigation revealed that five people were travelling from Diwan Cheruvu area in Rajahmundry to Kovvuru at around 9.45am when a truck coming in the opposite direction hit their car. "Three died on the spot and another succumbed to his injuries while being shifted to hospital, and the remaining passenger is in critical condition," said the official. The truck driver was absconding and the police was searching for him, said the official. The Police are in the process of registering a case. *—PTI*

Mumbai gets highest rainfall in 107 yrs

Mumbai sees earliest monsoon in 75 years; Red alert in Kerala & Andhra



The Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation suspended operations on a line after flooding at an underground station raised concerns over the construction quality and monsoon preparedness **PHOTO: X**

MUMBAI, 26 MAY

Mumbai witnessed its earliest monsoon onset in 75 years on Monday, triggering its highest rainfall in 107 years that paralysed suburban rail services and inundated large parts of the city, including a key underground Metro station. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) warned of thunderstorms, gusty winds (50–60 kmph), and continued rainfall over the next 24 hours.TheIMD alos issued a red alert for Mumbai. Meanwhile, one man died in Raigad after being struck by lightning.

The Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation (MMRC) suspended operations on Metro Line 3 (Aqua Line) between Acharya Atre Chowk and Worli after flooding at the Acharya Atre Chowk underground station raised concerns over construction quality and monsoon preparedness. Viral videos showed water entering ticketing bays, collapsed ceilings, and scattered machinery.

Central Railway's Harbour line was suspended due to track inundation at key stations like Masjid, Byculla, Dadar, and Badlapur, causing morning rush-hour chaos. While Western Railway claimed normal operations, commuters at Kandivali reported delays due to "technical reasons".

Vehicular traffic was severely affected with waterlogging at major junctions like King's Circle, Dadar TT East, Parel TT, Wadala, Hindmata, and even KEM Hospital in Parel. A BEST spokesperson said buses on 12 routes were diverted. *—PTI*

Kerala: Flooded villages and uprooted trees

Kerala battered by intense rains; Uprooted trees cause damage, fatality **PHOTO: PTI**

Northern Kerala continues to battle intense rainfall with widespread waterlogging and tree uprooting. In Wayanad, tribal families from Puzhamkuni were shifted to relief camps. Similar efforts were made in Kozhikode, where rivers have breached warning levels. Thrissur faced major traffic disruptions, including a tree fall on the Thrissur-Guruvayoor rail line.

IMD issued red and yellow alerts for several districts including Idukki, Palakkad, and Ernakulam, warning of traffic congestion, landslides, and landslips. A scheduled women's interaction with Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan in Kochi was postponed due to the weather. *—PTI*

Visitors at a beach in Kochi during rainfall with strong winds on Sunday **PHOTO: PTI**

MONSOON REACHES ANDHRA

The southwest monsoon has officially entered the Rayalaseema region, the Andhra Pradesh State Disaster Management Authority confirmed. IMD said conditions are ripe for further advancement into other parts of the state and nearby regions. A low-pressure system is expected to form over the Bay of Bengal by 27 May. Rainfall was recorded in Vijayawada over the weekend, while cloudy skies dominated much of the region. The IMD said an upper air trough running from Marathwada to coastal Andhra Pradesh could intensify rainfall over the coming days. PTI

SC orders status quo on Bhushan Steel liquidation

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

- The court criticised the resolution professional, CoC, and NCLT for enabling a 'flagrant violation' of the IBC, calling the NCLT and NCLAT orders 'perverse' and lacking jurisdiction

The Supreme Court on Monday ordered a status quo on the liquidation proceedings of Bhushan Steel and Power Ltd (BPSL) pending before the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), citing concerns that liquidation may jeopardise JSW Steel's upcoming review petition.

A bench of Justices B V Nagarathna and Satish Chandra Sharma said the review petition must be filed within the legal time limit and in accordance with the law. Senior advocate Neeraj Kishan Kaul, appearing for JSW, argued that NCLT was moving to appoint a liquidator prematurely, despite BPSL being a profit-making entity.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Committee of Creditors (CoC), suggested adjourning the NCLT hearing to 10 June to safeguard all parties' interests. Mehta highlighted the complexities of reversing transactions involving foreign banks if liquidation proceeds.

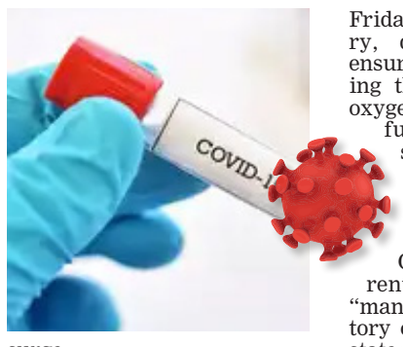
Senior advocate Dhruv Mehta, representing former promoter Sanjay Singhal, contested the maintainability of JSW's plea.

JSW approached the apex court after its resolution plan for BPSL was nullified by the Supreme Court on 2 May. The court had found the plan, approved in 2019, to be illegal and in violation of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), ordering BPSL's liquidation under Section 33(1) of the IBC and Article 142 of the Constitution.

The court criticised the resolution professional, CoC, and NCLT for enabling a "flagrant violation" of the IBC, calling the NCLT and NCLAT orders "perverse" and lacking jurisdiction. JSW has now sought to halt liquidation until its review is heard. *—PTI*

Three states report fresh Covid–19 cases

NEW DELHI/PATNA/ KOLKATA, 26 MAY



Delhi has reported a total of 104 active Covid-19 cases, according to official data. Health officials said 24 patients have recovered in the past week.

Last week, the total number of active cases stood at 99, according to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare's COVID-19 dashboard.

A senior Delhi government health official confirmed the figures, adding that while the situation remains under control, authorities are closely monitoring any potential surge.

Delhi has not reported any Covid-related fatalities in recent weeks, officials said.

The Delhi government on Friday last issued an advisory, directing hospitals to ensure preparedness, including the availability of beds, oxygen, essential drugs and functional equipment such as ventilators and BiPAP machines.

1st Covid case in Bihar

Bihar on Monday registered the state's first Covid-19 case of the current wave. A 31-year-old "man from Patna, with no history of travelling outside the state recently, has tested positive for Covid-19. The level of infection is very mild. The case is being monitored closely and all necessary protocols are being followed," said Patna Civil Surgeon Abinash Kumar Singh.

11 active cases in Bengal

Four more people tested positive for Covid-19 in West Bengal, taking the count of active cases to 11, a health department official said on Monday.

The patients are undergoing treatment at different hospitals, he said, adding that most of these cases were reported from Kolkata and its suburbs.

"These patients are under observation. The number of positive cases was seven till Saturday," he said. *—PTI*

ED seizes cash, assets in ₹12K cr Jaypee fraud

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

The Enforcement Directorate has said it seized cash of Rs 1.70 crore and documents related to immovable assets during searches conducted against Jaypee Infratech Ltd (JIL), Jaiprakash Associates Ltd (JAL) and other entities in an alleged homebuyers' fraud case linked money laundering investigation.

The raids were carried out at 15 premises in Delhi, Noida, Ghaziabad and Mumbai on May 23 under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

"The search covered offices and premises of JAL, its related entities and its promoters directors.

"Searches were also conducted at the offices and premises related to key business associates of JAL, including Gaursons India Pvt Ltd, Gulshan Homz Pvt Ltd, and Mahagun Real Estate Pvt Ltd.," the central probe agency said in a statement issued on Sunday.

The money laundering case stems from FIRs registered by the Economic Offences Wing of Delhi Police and Uttar Pradesh Police against companies like JAL, JIL, and their promoters, directors.

The FIRs allege large-scale fraud, including dishonest inducement of homebuyers and investors to invest funds under the pretext of allotment of residential apartments and plots in projects such as Jaypee Wishtown (a project of JIL) and Jaypee Greens (a venture of JAL). *—PTI*

Meena Kumari, husband get relief in land row after 30 yrs

Meena Kumari **PHOTO: X**

MUMBAI, 26 MAY

In a legal dispute spanning over three decades, a local court here has ordered a housing society to evict the land it had leased in 1966 from yesteryear Bollywood couple Kamal Amrohi and Meena Kumari in Bandra.

The appellate bench of the Court of Small Causes in Bandra has ruled in favour of Amrohi's son, Tajdar Amrohi, and ordered the 162-member society to hand over possession of the land in the posh Pali Hill locality within six months.

The order was passed on 23 April.

Additional Chief Judge Ashish Ayachit and Judge DR Mali held that the society failed to pay the contractual rent regularly.

"The society has consciously committed a breach of the covenants of the indenture of lease regarding the payment of contractual rent," the order said.

"The defendant society was not ready and willing to pay the arrears of rent, and they failed to comply with the provision of section 12(3) of the Bombay Rent Act. Therefore, the plaintiffs (Amrohi) are entitled to a decree of eviction," it said.

Meena Kumari and Amrohi purchased the land measuring over 11,000 square yards at Pali Hill in suburban Bandra in 1959. *—PTI*

Containers from MSC Elsa 3 drifted ashore at several locations in Kerala on Monday **PHOTO: PTI**

KERALA SEES FLOODED VILLAGES AND UPROOTED TREES

KOLLAM/ALAPPUZHA, 26 MAY

Authorities are urging the public to steer clear of containers washing ashore from a Liberian cargo ship that sank off the Kerala coast. Reports indicate that at least ten containers have been discovered along the southern stretches of Kollam and coastal Alappuzha districts.

The precise number of containers that have reached the shore is yet to be determined, and police have been deployed across the affected areas to manage the situation. Officials have warned that the vessel was carrying 13 hazardous cargos among its over 640 containers, raising safety concerns.

The cargo ship capsized early on Sunday, resulting in a significant oil spill that has prompted a statewide alert. The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) reported that the fuel is drifting at a speed of approximately three kilometres per hour, posing a risk to Kerala's ecologically sensitive coastline.

Among the hazardous substances on board, calcium carbide has drawn particular concern due to its reaction with seawater, producing highly flammable acetylene gas. The ICG is leading efforts to tackle the pollution and monitor the spreading oil slick.

Furthermore, the Office of the Chief Commissioner of Customs has confirmed that of the 643 containers, 73 were empty and 13 contained dangerous goods. Customs authorities deployed marine units along the coast and are conducting surveillance jointly with other agencies. Public cooperation is crucial for safety and recovery efforts. *—PTI*

POHA & PRISON BREAKS

Jaipur prisoners enjoy picnic with girlfriends

JAIPUR, 26 MAY

Representational image **PHOTO: ANI**

What was supposed to be a routine hospital visit for five inmates from the Jaipur Central Jail turned into an impromptu city tour with poha breakfasts, hotel stays and reunions with wives and girlfriends.

A total of 13 people, including five constables, four inmates and four relatives, were arrested on Sunday after it came to the fore that the inmates had allegedly paid bribes to enjoy a few hours of freedom outside the jail, the police said on Monday.

The four inmates, Rafiq Bakri, Bhanwar Lal, Ankit Bansal and Karan Gupta, had allegedly secured approvals for medical checkups at the SMS Hospital.

But instead of heading to their appointments, they allegedly bribed their way for a leisurely day out in the city, and only one prisoner made it to the hospital, the police said.

None of the four returned to the jail by the 5.30pm deadline on Saturday.

"This outing was arranged for around Rs 25,000, routed through a middleman. The escorting constables were promised Rs 5,000 each," said a senior officer.

Rafiq and Bhanwar met their wife and ex-girlfriend, respectively, at a Jalupura hotel, where Rafiq's wife was later found with narcotics and was booked under the NDPS Act, DCP (East) Tejaswani Gautam said.

Ankit and Karan were tracked to a hotel near the airport, where they were seen having poha for breakfast. The room was booked by Ankit's girlfriend. Jail sources said that the outing was masterminded by a convicted extortionist still operating from inside the prison. *—PTI*

BLACK LIVES MATTER

Thousands attend a candlelight vigil at 'Say Their Names' Cemetery on the five-year anniversary of George Floyd's death, on Sunday. In 2020, Floyd, a Black American man was arrested by Derek Chauvin, a police officer in Minneapolis. Chauvin restrained Floyd by pressing his knees into Floyd's neck which led to his death. His death sparked the Black Lives Matter movement. 'Say Their Names' cemetery in South Minneapolis was created by two University of Pennsylvania students. It's a grassroots art installation blocks away from the George Floyd Memorial
PHOTO: PTI

LGBTQ+ tourism on the rise in 'inclusive' India

A growing number of businesses and travel agencies in India are catering to LGBTQ+ travelers, who report a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere.

Australians Alan Maurice and his husband, David, are raring to come back to India for the third time.

The couple have already completed the "Golden Triangle," connecting the cities of Delhi, Agra, and Jaipur, and earlier this year, they visited Mumbai and Hampi in southern India, famed for its temples and palaces.

"The idea is to visit Kerala, Kashmir, and Delhi soon — it has been on our bucket list," Maurice told DW.

David agrees that his experience travelling in India was very enjoyable.

"I don't recall a single bad instance in our travels. We are mindful and watchful, but many of the places we visited offered inclusive environments, fostering a strong sense of community," David told DW.

Alan and David are among the thousands of gay tourists visiting India, an emerging destination for LGBTQ+ travel. New players have entered the market in response to rising demand.

Companies like Indjapink, Pink Escapes, Pink Vibgyor, and LGBT Tourism India are among those focusing their business on the LGBTQ+ tourism market. They range from high-end luxury experiences to budget-conscious backpacking options.

"We have seen a rising number of LGBTQ+ travelers choosing our hostels as their base to explore the diverse and vibrant spirit of India. They come not only for the sights but to feel seen, respected, and part of a larger, welcoming community," said Pranav Dangi, founder and CEO of "The Hosteller," a backpacker hostel chain.

"We've not only hosted but also employed members from the LGBTQ+ community who have added immense contribution towards our organization's growth. In our spaces, everyone is free to just be."

India's Supreme Court decriminalised homosexuality in 2018, but same-sex marriage is still not legally recognised
PHOTO: FREEPIK

According to the International LGBTQ+ Travel Association (IGLTA), a network of LGBTQ+ tourism businesses, India has been making strides in creating a more inclusive environment for the LGBTQ+ community.

According to the 2024 Gay Travel Index compiled by the Berlin-based International Spartacus Gay Guide, India is ranked 44th out of 213 countries and territories for LGBTQ+ travel safety, which is a significant improvement from its 82nd rank among 150 countries in the 2021 LGBTQ+ Travel Safety Index.

Rajesh Khanna, executive director of Abercrombie & Kent, a leading luxury travel agency, told DW that the majority of the agency's LGBTQ+ clientele come from North America, with a smaller segment hailing from Europe.

"There's growing acceptance of this niche. They love the festival of colors, Holi, and clients are now beginning to explore the south," Khanna told DW.

High-end travel LGBTQ+ agencies like "Serene Journeys," which offer exclusive and personalized travel for customers, speak to every traveler before planning their trip.

Robindro Saikhom, who runs "Serene Journeys," told DW that he has taken several trips with his husband to India. He added his agency does not market India as a "gay destination" in the way of cities like Sitges, San Francisco, or Berlin which are famed for their pride parades and LGBTQ+ nightlife.

Though there are no precise numbers for gay tourism in India due to privacy and data considerations, the IGLTA says it has seen clear indicators of growth, with more travel agencies and tour operators offering LGBTQ+ oriented options over the past year.

"IGLTA membership in India has nearly doubled in recent years, highlighting the tourism sector's increased recognition of the value and importance of welcoming this diverse global market," Parth Patnaik, IGLTA's India membership manager, told DW.

"With neighboring countries, such as Nepal, becoming more visibly inclusive, it's helping to open India's eyes to the potential," he added.

India's Supreme Court decriminalised homosexuality in 2018, but same-sex marriage is still not legally recognized. This issue is pending in Parliament. Tanzella points out one of the biggest challenges is bridging the knowledge gap as more travel agencies cater to this sector.

"The key is ongoing education and authentic engagement with the community. And we're hopeful that marriage equality will be the next important step in the near future," he said. *—DW News*

SALAR سالار

Procrastination: A coping skill or perfectionism?

Can you only start a boring admin task once your house is clean? Do you leave the trickiest emails to the end of the day?

Delaying a goal or task – usually to do something less important instead – is known as procrastination and it affects many of us. Most people report procrastinating some of the time, but for others it can be chronic.

While procrastination is common, it can be frustrating and lead to feelings of shame, guilt and anxiety.

Here's why you might be avoiding that task – and five steps to get on top of it.

You might find yourself putting off starting something, abandoning it before it's finished or leaving it to the very last minute.

Thoughts such as "I can catch up later" or "I'll turn it in late" can be telltale signs of procrastination. Maybe you've Googled "Why do I procrastinate?" while procrastinating and have come across this article.

Other times, you might not even be aware you're doing it. Perhaps you look up and realise you've been scrolling online shopping and kitten videos for the past hour, instead of doing your assignment.

Procrastination is not a character flaw, and it doesn't mean you're lazy or even bad at managing time. Framing it this way can make you feel even worse about the behaviour, and stops you learning the real reasons behind it.

If you want to stop procrastinating, it's important to understand why you do it in the first place.

Procrastination can be a way of dealing with tricky emotions. Research shows we put off tasks we find boring or frustrating, as well as those we resent or that lack personal meaning.

We may avoid tasks that create stress or painful emotions, such as completing a tax return where you owe a lot of money, or packing up a parent's house after their death.

There a few deeper reasons, too.

Procrastination can be a sign of perfectionism. This is when an intense fear of failure – of getting something wrong – creates so much pressure to be perfect that it stops us from even getting started.

People with low self-esteem also tend to procrastinate, whether or not they experience perfectionism. Here, it's a negative self-view coupled with low confidence that gets in the way of beginning a task.

Distraction can be a factor, too. But being very easily distracted can also be a sign you're avoiding the task.

For some people, difficulty completing tasks could be a sign of an underlying issue such as attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder.

Is procrastination ever helpful? It depends.

Some people enjoy the pressure of a deadline. Leaving a task to the last minute can be a strategy to improve motivation or get it done in a limited time.

Procrastination can also be a coping mechanism.

Delaying unpleasant tasks may make us feel better in the moment. Avoiding the task may mean we don't have to face the possibility of getting it wrong, or the negative emotions or consequences it involves.

Procrastination can trigger self-criticism as well as negative emotions such as guilt and shame.

In the long term it can also lead to mental health problems including anxiety and depression.

So what can we do about it? 5 steps to tackling procrastination.

Face it – you're procrastinating. Being able to identify and name these patterns is the first step to overcoming procrastination.

Explore why. Understanding the underlying causes is key. Are you afraid of getting it wrong? Is your to-do list unrealistic? Or do you just love a tight deadline? If your procrastination results from perfectionism or low self-esteem you may wish to explore evidence-based treatments such as cognitive behavioural therapy, with a therapist or through self-guided activities.

Start prioritising. Take a good look at your to-do list. Are the most urgent or important things at the top? Have you given yourself enough time to complete the tasks? Breaking a task into smaller chunks and taking regular breaks will help prevent you from becoming overwhelmed. If you're not sure what's the most important, try talking it through with someone. If you tend to leave the most boring things to the last minute and then never get around to them, set some time aside at the start of each day to get these tasks done.

Avoid distractions. Set your phone to "do not disturb", hang a sign on the door, tell those around you you'll be "offline" for a little while. Setting a clear start and end time can help you stick to this rule.

Build in rewards. Life is hard work – be kind to yourself. Whenever you complete a difficult task or cross something off your to-do list, balance this by doing something more enjoyable. Building in rewards can make facing the to-do list a little bit easier. *—PTI*

While procrastination is common, it can be frustrating and lead to feelings of shame, guilt and anxiety
PHOTO: FREEPIK

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

What will happen to our large 'digital legacy' when we die?

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Imagine you are planning the funeral music for a loved one who has died. You can't remember their favourite song, so you try to login to their Spotify account. Then you realise the account login is inaccessible, and with it has gone their personal history of Spotify playlists, annual "wrapped" analytics, and liked songs curated to reflect their taste, memories, and identity.

We tend to think about inheritance in physical terms: money, property, personal belongings. But the vast volume of digital stuff we accumulate in life and leave behind in death is now just as important – and this "digital legacy" is probably more meaningful.

Digital legacies are increasingly complex and evolving. They include now-familiar items such as social media and banking accounts, along with our stored photos, videos and messages. But they also encompass virtual currencies, behavioural tracking data, and even AI-generated avatars.

This digital data is not only fundamental to our online identities in life, but to our inheritance in death. So how can we properly plan for what happens to it?

Digital legacy is commonly classified into two categories: digital assets and digital presence.

Digital assets include items with economic value. For example, domain names, financial accounts, monetised social media, online businesses, virtual currencies, digital goods, and personal digital IP. Access to these is spread across platforms, hidden behind passwords or restricted by privacy laws.

Digital presence includes content with no monetary value. However, it may have great personal significance. For example, our photos and videos, social media profiles, email or chat threads, and other content archived in cloud or platform services.

There is also data that might not seem like content. It may not even seem to belong to us. This includes analytics data such as health and wellness app tracking data. It also includes behavioural data such as location, search or viewing history collected from platforms such as Google, Netflix and Spotify.

This data reveals patterns in our preferences, passions, and daily life that can hold intimate meaning. For example, knowing the music a loved one listened to on the day they died.

Digital remains now also include scheduled posthumous messages or AI-generated avatars.

All of this raises both practical and ethical questions about identity, privacy, and corporate power over our digital afterlives. Who has the right to access, delete, or transform this data?

Just as we prepare wills for physical possessions, we need to plan for our digital remains. Without clear instructions, important digital data may be lost and inaccessible to our loved ones. These steps may sound uncontroversial. But digital wills remain uncommon. And without them, managing someone's digital legacy can be fraught with legal and technical barriers.

Platform terms of service and privacy rules often prevent access by anyone other than the account holder. They can also require official documentation such as a death certificate before granting limited access to download or close an account.

In such instances, gaining access will probably only be possible through imperfect workarounds, such as searching online for traces of someone's digital life, attempting to use account recovery tools, or scouring personal documents for login information.

Current platform policies have clear limitations for handling digital legacies. For example, policies are inconsistent. They are also typically limited to memorialising or deleting accounts.

With no unified framework, service providers often prioritise data privacy over family access. Current tools prioritise visible content such as profiles or posts. However, they exclude less visible yet equally valuable behavioural data such as listening habits.

Problems can also arise when data is removed from its original platform. For example, photos from Facebook can lose their social and relational meaning without their associated comment threads, reactions, or interactivity.

Meanwhile, emerging uses of posthumous data, especially AI-generated avatars, raise urgent issues about digital personhood, ownership, and possible harms. These "digital remains" may be stored indefinitely on commercial servers without standard protocols for curation or user rights.

The result is a growing tension between personal ownership and corporate control. This makes digital legacy not only a matter of individual concern but one of digital governance.

Managing our digital legacies demands more than practical foresight. It compels critical reflection on the infrastructures and values that shape our online afterlives. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Pope Leo XIV takes charge as bishop of Rome

ROME, 26 MAY

Pope Leo XIV declared himself a Roman on Sunday as he completed the final ceremonial steps cementing his role as the bishop of Rome.

The first American pope formally took possession of the St John Lateran Basilica, which is Rome's cathedral and seat of the diocese, with an evening Mass attended by Roman priests and faithful. He then took the popemobile for a visit to St Mary Major, where he prayed before Pope Francis' tomb and an icon of the Virgin Mary beloved to many Roman faithful. In his homily, Leo said he wanted to listen to them "in order to learn, understand and decide things together."

One of the many titles that Leo assumed on becoming Pope was the bishop of Rome. *—PTI*

US-German faces charge of US Embassy attack

NEW YORK, 26 MAY

A dual US-German citizen has been arrested on charges that he travelled to Israel and attempted to firebomb the branch office of the US Embassy in Tel Aviv, officials said on Sunday.

Federal prosecutors in New York said the man, Joseph Neumeyer, walked up to the embassy building on 19 May with a backpack containing Molotov cocktails but got into a confrontation with a guard and eventually ran away, dropping his backpack as the guard tried to grab him. Neumeyer was arrested from a hotel a few blocks away from the embassy, says a criminal complaint filed in the Eastern District of New York. The attack took place against the backdrop of Israel's war in Gaza, now in its 19th month. *—PTI*

Aus state plans ban on machete sales following violence

MELBOURNE, 26 MAY

In response to a violent gang altercation at a suburban shopping centre, the Victorian government has announced a ban on the sale of machetes. Premier Jacinta Allan revealed that the prohibition will come into effect on Wednesday, after a 20-year-old man sustained serious injuries in a clash involving eight individuals armed with machetes. Four suspects have been arrested in connection with the incident. The ban will classify machetes as cutting edge knives with blades exceeding 20 centimetres and will also criminalise possession, with limited exceptions, from 1 September. Violators could face up to two years in prison and hefty fines. A three-month amnesty period allows individuals to surrender machetes to police without penalty. *—PTI*

Shooting in US' Little River leaves 11 injured

LITTLE RIVER, 26 MAY

At least 11 individuals have been hospitalised following a shooting on Sunday night in the beach town of Little River, South Carolina. Horry County Police reported the incident occurred around 9.30pm, although they have not disclosed the conditions of the injured or the circumstances surrounding the shooting. Authorities noted that more victims were arriving at local hospitals via private vehicles. Around 90 minutes post-incident, police deemed it an isolated event, asserting there was no ongoing threat to the community. Details regarding potential suspects or the motive behind the shooting remain unclear. The shooting took place near a boat dock adjacent to the Intracoastal Waterway, with numerous police vehicles and ambulances seen responding to the scene. *—PTI*

Putin has gone crazy, says Trump

As US tries to broker peace, Russia again launches one of its largest drone attacks on Ukraine

KYIV, 26 MAY

US President Donald Trump said his Russian counter Vladimir Putin has gone "crazy" by stepping up the bombing of Ukraine while the US tries to broker peace.

His comments came as Russia overnight launched the biggest drone attack on Ukraine in the more than three-year war, a Ukrainian official said Monday. The previous largest attack was on Sunday.

Trump made it clear he is losing patience with Putin. "I've always had a very good relationship with Putin, but something has happened to him. He has gone absolutely CRAZY!" Trump wrote on social media post on Sunday night.

Trump said Putin is "needlessly killing a lot of people," pointing out that "missiles and drones are being shot into cities in Ukraine, for no reason whatsoever."

The US President warned that if Putin wants to conquer all of Ukraine, it will "lead to the downfall of Russia!"

But Trump expressed frustration with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy as well, saying that he is "doing his Country no favours by talking the way he does."

The Russian bombardment on Sunday night included 355 drones, Yuriy Ihnat, head of the Ukrainian Air Force's communications department, said.

Firefighters try to put out a fire following a Russian attack in Kyiv region of Ukraine on Sunday **PHOTO: PTI**

Russia also fired nine cruise missiles during the attack, Ukrainian authorities said. Officials reported some civilians were injured. No deaths were immediately reported.

On Saturday night, the Ukrainian capital Kyiv and other regions came under a massive Russian combined drone-and-missile attack that killed at least 12 people and injured dozens. Ukrainian officials described that bombardment as Russia's largest aerial assault during the conflict, using 69 missiles of various types and 298 drones. *—PTI*

Trump hints at Iran nuke announcement in 2 days

Trump on Sunday indicated there was progress with Iran on its nuclear programme and hinted that an announcement could come in the "next two days." He was notably more upbeat than the Omani mediator of the talks between the United States and Iran, who said Friday that the two nations made "some but not conclusive" progress in the fifth round of negotiations in Rome. "We've had some very, very good talks with Iran," Trump told reporters in northern New Jersey after leaving his golf club, where he spent most of the weekend. "And I don't know if I'll be telling you anything good or bad over the next two days, but I have a feeling I might be telling you something good."

Trump says he'll delay 50% tariff on EU until July

Trump said that the US will delay implementation of a 50 per cent tariff on goods from the European Union from 1 June until 9 July to buy time for negotiations with the bloc. The agreement came after a call on Sunday with Ursula von der Leyen, the President of the European Commission, who had told Trump that she "wants to get down to serious negotiations," according to Trump's retelling. Von der Leyen, Trump said, vowed to "rapidly get together and see if we can work something out." For her part, von der Leyen said the EU and the US "share the world's most consequential and close trade relationship....To reach a good deal, we would need the time until 9 July."

Palestinians inspect the damage at a school used as a shelter by displaced residents that was hit by Israeli military strike on Monday **PHOTO: PTI**

52 killed in Israeli strikes on Gaza

DEIR AL-BALAH, 26 MAY

- A new aid system supported by Israel and the United States but rejected by UN agencies and aid groups is expected to begin operations as soon as Monday

Israeli strikes killed at least 52 people in the Gaza Strip on Monday, including 36 in a school-turned-shelter that was struck as people slept, igniting their belongings, according to local health officials. The military said it targeted militants operating from the school.

Israel renewed its offensive in March after ending a ceasefire with Hamas. It has vowed to seize control of Gaza and keep fighting until Hamas is destroyed or disarmed, and until it returns the remaining 58 hostages, a third of them believed to be alive, from the October 7, 2023, attack that ignited the war.

Israel began allowing a trickle of humanitarian aid into Gaza last week after blocking all food, medicine, fuel or other goods from entering for 2 1/2 months. Aid groups have warned of famine and say the aid that has come in is nowhere near enough to meeting mounting needs.

A new aid system supported by Israel and the United States but rejected by UN agencies and aid groups is expected to begin operations as soon as Monday, despite the resignation of the American leading the effort, who said it would not be able to operate independently.

Israel says it plans to seize full control of Gaza. *—PTI*

Guam Guv visits Taiwan amid rising tensions

TAIPEI/JAKARTA, 26 MAY

Lourdes A Leon Guerrero, the Governor of Guam, is visiting Taiwan this week for the first time since assuming office in 2019. Her visit comes at a time when China's threat to invade Taiwan has escalated with the enhancement of its naval, missile and air capabilities.

Guam is viewed as a crucial player in any potential military actions concerning Taiwan, as it hosts approximately 9,700 members of the US military across various branches. The island is strategically located about 4,750km from the Chinese mainland, within range of Chinese ballistic missiles, leading to concerns among residents about becoming a target in the event of conflict.

Governor Guerrero willmeet Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te and Foreign Minister Lin Chia-lung, as well as discussions on tourism, healthcare, and fisheries.

Meanwhile, Chinese Premier Li Qiang met with Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto on Sunday to explore avenues for expanding trade and investment amidst global economic challenges. Li arrived in Jakarta on Saturday for a three-day visit, his first overseas tour of the year.

During a business reception on Saturday evening attended by 60 prominent Chinese entrepreneurs, Li highlighted China's economic growth despite increasing external pressures, stating, "The current international situation is a stalemate." *—PTI*

Macron visits Vietnam; seals defence, nuke, Airbus deals

HANOI, 26 MAY

French President Emmanuel Macron called on Monday for closer cooperation between Vietnam and France in an increasingly unstable global landscape, as he visited Hanoi as part of a Southeast Asia tour focused on strengthening regional ties.

Macron emphasised the need for "an order based on law" at a time of "both great imbalance and a return to power-driven rhetoric and intimidation". He next heads to Indonesia and Singapore.

The visit comes amid trade tensions, with the US threatening steep tariffs on goods from Europe. Vietnamese exports to the US were hit with 46 per cent tariffs in April.

Macron signed more than a dozen agreements on defence, nuclear power and trade, including one with the Vietnamese budget airline company VietJet and Airbus to buy 20 A330-900 planes.

Golden Visa for Indians

Vietnam last month announced a new 10-year Golden Visa to attract tourists, foreign investors and skilled professionals from developing countries, including India. The programme appears to be part of Vietnam's aim to become a global hub for business, culture and alliance in Southeast Asia.

The visa offers 10-year residency with option for renewal and access to Vietnam's schools and healthcare, besides a potential to achieve for permanent residency.

— PTI with Agencies

This screengrab from a viral video shows French President Emmanuel Macron appearing to be slapped by wife Brigitte in Vietnam. Macron later called it a harmless banter, brushing off the reaction as overblown, saying, 'It's not a geo-planetary catastrophe' **PHOTO: PTI**

PAK SPARES 2GW POWER FOR BITCOIN MINING, AI DATA CENTRES

ISLAMABAD, 26 MAY

The Pakistan government, in a major move to transform the country into a global leader in digital innovation, has allocated 2 Gigawatts (GW) of electricity to power Bitcoin mining and artificial intelligence (AI) data centres.

Pakistan's Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb in a statement on Sunday said this strategic allocation marked a pivotal moment in Pakistan's digital transformation journey, unlocking economic potential by turning excess energy into innovation, investment, and international revenue.

"Pakistan is uniquely positioned — geographically and economically — to become a global hub for data centres. As a digital bridge between Asia, Europe, and the Middle East, Pakistan offers the most strategic location in the world for data flow and digital infrastructure," the statement by the Pakistan Finance Minister read. *—PTI*

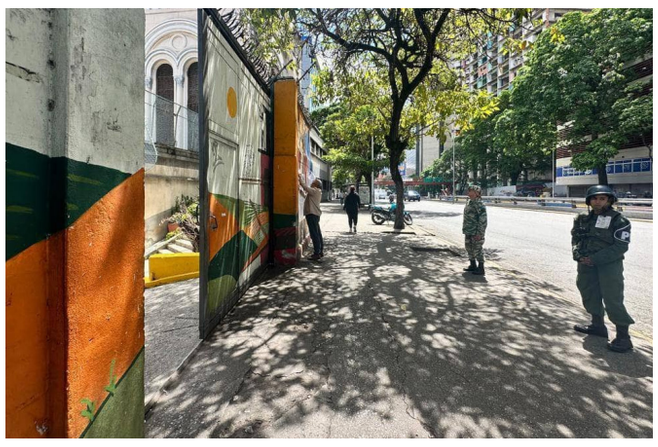
DISTRUST IN THE SYSTEM

Venezuelan poll booths empty as citizens boycott

CARACAS, 26 MAY

Venezuelans still reeling from the outcome of last year's Presidential election did not respond on Sunday to government calls to get out and vote for lawmakers, governors and other officials. As a result, voting centres were practically empty at times.

The election, which the political opposition urged people to boycott, was the first to allow broad voter participation since the Presidential contest that President Nicolas Maduro claimed to have won last year despite credible evidence to the contrary. It took place two days after the government detained dozens of people, including a prominent opposition leader, and linked them to an alleged plot to hinder the vote.



Ninety percent of the Venezuelan population decided not to vote as the political opposition urged voters to abstain **PHOTO: X @agusantonetti**

Members of the military throughout the day outnumbered voters at many polling centres in the capital, Caracas, where no lines formed outside in stark contrast with the enthusiasm of the July Presidential election.

Yet, senior government officials insisted polling centres saw such overwhelming participation on Sunday that they had to remain open past the scheduled 12 hours of operation. Electoral authorities claimed 42.66 per cent of registered voters cast ballots.

Voter participation, in the eyes of the opposition, legitimises Maduro's claim to power and his government's repressive apparatus, which after the July election detained more than 2,000 people including protesters, poll workers, political activists and minors, to quash dissent.

"I'm not going to vote," truck driver Carlos Leon, 41, said standing near a desolate polling station in downtown Caracas. *—PTI*

B'deshi govt staff protest against new service law

DHAKA, 26 MAY

- Employees at the Secretariat, which houses ministries and important government offices, locked the main gate in protest against the Public Service Act amendment

Hundreds of government employees on Monday briefly locked the main gate of Bangladesh Secretariat – the heart of the administration – in the capital Dhaka, intensifying their protests against a new service law which allows easier dismissal of officials for misconduct.

Eyewitnesses and media reports said officials and employees of the Secretariat, which houses ministries and important government offices, locked the main gate on the third day of their protest against the Public Service Act amendment.

The agitating employees gathered near the main entrance around 12.30pm. During that time, the gate was closed. It was reopened about half an hour later, around 1,00pm. The protesting employees then moved away from the gate and protested in small groups across the secretariat premises.

According to media reports, official activities inside the complex were largely stalled as the employees continued the work stoppage.

The protests started after Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus-led interim government published the revised version of the law, allowing easier dismissal of officials for misconduct. *—PTI*

Rupee rises 35 paise to settle at 85.10 against USD

MUMBAI, 26 MAY

The rupee strengthened for the second consecutive session, rising 35 paise to close at 85.10 against the US dollar on Monday. The gain was supported by strong domestic equity markets, continued foreign fund inflows, and a weaker US dollar. Sentiment was further lifted by the RBI's record Rs 2.69 lakh crore dividend to the government for FY25. The rupee traded between 84.78 and 85.18 during the day. On Friday, it had appreciated by 50 paise to settle at 85.45. Analysts noted improved global risk appetite and thin trading volumes due to the US Memorial Day holiday. Meanwhile, Brent crude rose 0.17 per cent to USD 64.89 a barrel, and India's forex reserves dropped by USD 4.89 billion to USD 685.73 billion for the week ended 16 May. *—PTI*

Gold climbs Rs 550 to Rs 99,300 per 10g

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

Gold prices rose by Rs 550 to Rs 99,300 per 10g in the national capital on Monday on persistent buying by jewellers and retailers, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at Rs 98,750 per 10g on Friday. Since Wednesday last week, gold prices have risen by Rs 2,760 per 10g. Gold of 99.5 per cent purity appreciated by Rs 500 to Rs 98,800 per 10g (inclusive of all taxes) on Monday. Also, silver prices rallied by Rs 1,170 to Rs 1,00,370 per kg (inclusive of all taxes). It had settled at Rs 99,200 per kg in the previous market session. Meanwhile, spot gold in the overseas markets dipped USD 24.83 per ounce or 0.74 per cent to USD 3,332.59 per ounce. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Audi India partners with Neeraj Chopra

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

Luxury car manufacturer Audi India has announced its collaboration with double-Olympic medalist javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra. This partnership aligns with the shared values of world-class performance, explosive speed, and iconic stature, as highlighted in the company's statement. "Audi represents those who push boundaries – individuals defined not just by their performance but by an unwavering pursuit of excellence. Neeraj Chopra embodies that spirit," said Balbir Singh Dhillon, Head of Audi India. He noted that Chopra's focus, speed, and exceptional abilities make him a fitting ambassador for the brand, which seeks to lead rather than follow. Chopra also expressed his enthusiasm about joining the Audi family. *—PTI*

Two companies to create 8,000 jobs in Andhra Pradesh

KUPPAM, 26 MAY

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu announced the allocation of land for two companies in Chittoor district, aimed at establishing industrial units that are set to create approximately 8,000 jobs. Naidu shared details of the initiative, stating that Shreeja Milk Producer Organisation will develop a dairy and animal feed processing facility, while Mother Dairy plans to set up a fruit pulp processing unit. In a post on X, Naidu highlighted the transformative investment strategies discussed with representatives from both companies, aligning with his vision for a poverty-free Swarna Andhra. The initiatives focus on enhancing the rural economy by procuring milk and horticultural products from local farmers, thereby increasing their income. *—PTI*

RBI seeks govt nod to lend in rupees to foreign nations

Move aims at boosting currency's use in cross-border trade

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is seeking government approval to allow domestic banks and their overseas branches to lend in Indian rupees to foreign borrowers, in a bid to internationalise the currency, according to two sources familiar with the matter.

The proposal, sent to the Finance Ministry last month, aims to boost the rupee's use in cross-border trade by initially targeting neighbouring countries — Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, and Sri Lanka — which together accounted for nearly USD 25 billion, or 90 per cent of India's South Asian exports in 2024–25, according to Ministry of Commerce data.

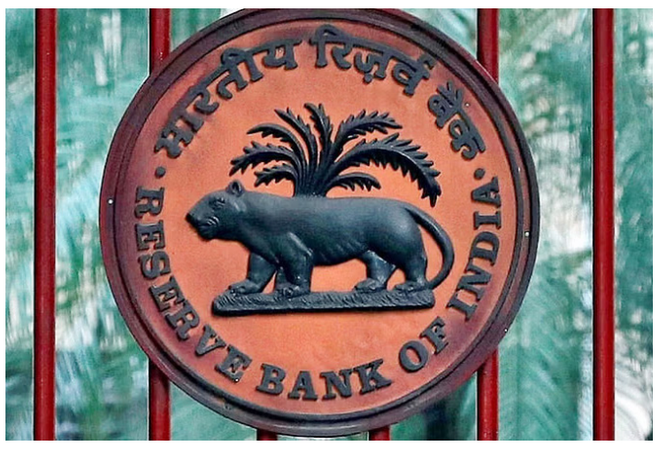
Currently, Indian banks abroad may lend only in foreign currencies, primarily to Indian companies. Rupee liquidity overseas is limited to government-backed credit lines or bilateral currency swap agreements. The RBI's move seeks to replace these with market-driven, commercial bank lending in rupees.

The central bank has taken several recent steps to internationalise the rupee, including permitting non-resident rupee accounts and pushing for foreign banks with vostro accounts to be allowed to invest in short-term sovereign debt.

The proposed loans would be trade-linked, with the broader aim of facilitating rupee trade settlements and reducing exposure to exchange rate fluctuations.

One source noted that easier access to rupee-denominated credit would support strategic projects and deepen financial integration in the region.

If implemented, this policy could significantly elevate the rupee's role in global trade and investment, positioning it as a more widely accepted currency in international markets.Neither the Finance Ministry nor the RBI responded to requests for comment. *—Agencies*



The proposal was sent to the Finance Ministry in April PHOTO: ANI

RBI to auction Treasury Bills of ₹19,000 crore

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced an auction of Government of India Treasury Bills (T-Bills) to raise Rs 19,000 crore, aimed at managing the government's short-term funding needs. The auction, scheduled for 28 May with settlement on 29 May, will offer T-Bills in three maturities: 91-day, 182-day, and 364-day.

The RBI stated the auction will use a multiple price method, allowing competitive bidding. Bids must be submitted electronically via the E-Kuber system. Results will be declared on the same day, and successful bidders must make payment on 29 May. This follows the RBI's recent G-Sec auction on 23 May, where Rs 27,000 crore in bonds were fully subscribed, reflecting robust investor interest in sovereign debt. *—PTI*

Relief to SpiceJet in Maran, KAL plea for ₹1,300 cr in damages

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

In a relief to SpiceJet, the Division Bench of the Delhi High Court on 23 May dismissed an appeal filed by KAL Airways (KALA) and its promoter Kalanithi Maran, seeking damages of more than Rs 1,300 crore.

Maran and KALA filed the appeal after it was rejected by an Arbitral Tribunal and later by a Single-Judge Bench of the High Court. The arbitration proceedings, led by a panel of three retired Supreme Court judges, had thoroughly examined and rejected the damages claim.

"The division bench of Delhi High Court in its order dated 23 May, 2025, dismissed the appeal filed by KALA and Kalanithi Maran seeking damages of more than Rs 1300 crore and other claims. These assertions were already previously rejected by the Arbitral Tribunal and then the Delhi High Court," SpiceJet said in a statement.

This was in addition to the pending dues worth Rs 53.50 crore sought by KALA from SpiceJet.

The dispute between Maran and SpiceJet began in 2015. In 2010, Kalanithi Maran and KALA acquired a controlling stake in SpiceJet, increasing their shareholding to 58.46 per cent from 37.7 per cent. However, in February 2015, they transferred their entire stake back to SpiceJet founder Ajay Singh as part of a revival deal.

Maran and KALA claimed they paid Rs 679 crore for warrants and preference shares that were never issued, sparking a legal battle.

"These claims were thoroughly examined and subsequently rejected by a panel of three retired Supreme Court judges. Following this, KALA and Kalanithi Maran appealed to the Single-Judge Bench of the Delhi High Court, seeking the same amount in damages, which was also rejected by the court," the airline said. *—Agencies*

Sensex surges by 455 points, Nifty tops 25,000

MUMBAI, 26 MAY

Indian benchmark indices experienced a significant rally on Monday, with the Sensex rising by 455.37 points, or 0.56 per cent, to close at 82,176.45. Earlier in the day, the 30-share BSE index peaked at 82,492.24, up by 771.16 points or 0.94 per cent. The NSE Nifty also saw a rise, climbing 148 points or 0.60 per cent to reach 25,001.15.

The positive momentum was driven by several factors, including India's emergence as the world's fourth-largest economy, surpassing Japan. The delay of 50 per cent EU tariffs by US President Donald Trump until 9 July further bolstered investor sentiment.

Additionally, the Reserve Bank of India announced a record Rs 2.69 lakh crore dividend to the government for FY25—27.4 per cent higher than the previous year—which is expected to assist the exchequer in managing increasing defence expenditures amidst geopolitical tensions.

The positive momentum was driven by several factors, including India's emergence as the world's fourth-largest economy PHOTO: PTI

Prominent gains were noted among stocks such as Mahindra & Mahindra, HCL Tech, Tata Motors, and Hindustan Unilever, while Eternal, UltraTech Cement, and Kotak Mahindra Bank lagged behind, with Eternal dropping by 4.51 per cent.

The early arrival of the southwest monsoon, hitting Kerala on Saturday, also contributed to the optimistic market outlook. The India Meteorological Department confirmed this was the earliest arrival since 2009.

In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi and Japan's Nikkei 225 closed positively, while European markets were performing well mid-session. However, US markets ended lower on Friday. *—PTI*

TECH TRANSITION

Jio seeks approval for 26 GHz band use in WiFi

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

Reliance Jio has approached the Telecommunication Engineering Centre (TEC), part of the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), to obtain approval for the utilisation of radiowaves in the 26 GHz band for WiFi services. Sources indicate that this request was made last week.

The move is significant in light of the Notice Inviting Application (NIA) from the 2022 spectrum auction, which stipulates that any spectrum assigned for 5G must receive prior clearance if it is to be repurposed for alternative technologies. The NIA outlines that should there be a transition to a different technology (beyond GSM/WCDMA/LTE/CDMA/IMT-2020 - 5G), telecommunications companies must provide at least six months' notice before testing new

PHOTO: PTI

technology Base Station sites. Furthermore, the technology must align with standards recognised by the ITU/TEC or other international standard-setting bodies.

In the 2022 auction, the telecom sector saw bids totalling Rs 1.5 lakh crore, with Jio, led by Mukesh Ambani, capturing nearly half of the spectrum on offer with an investment of Rs 88,078 crore. The firm secured airwaves in several bands, including 700 MHz, 800 MHz, 1800 MHz, 3300 MHz, and the 26 GHz bands. *—PTI*

Reliance Infra posts ₹4,387 cr net profit in Q4

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

Reliance Infrastructure Ltd (RInfra) on Monday reported a net profit of Rs 4,387 crore in the March quarter, mainly aided by a reduction in expenses. It had posted a net loss of Rs 220.58 crore in the January-March period of 2023-24, the company said in an exchange filing. The company's total income reduced to Rs 4,268.05 crore during the quarter from Rs 4,783.30 crore in the year-ago period. Reliance Infrastructure trimmed its expenses to Rs 4,827.97 crore from Rs 5,286.81 crore in the fourth quarter of the preceding financial year. As per the filing, the company earned an income of Rs 8,274.87 crore in the quarter against Rs 298.73 in Q4 FY24. For the entire FY25, Reliance Infrastructure posted a net profit of Rs 4,937.52 crore. *—PTI*

Leela Palaces IPO subscribed 6%

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

The initial public offer of Schloss Bangalore, which operates Leela Palaces Hotels and Resorts, subscribed six per cent on the first day of bidding on Monday.

The initial share sale received bids for 28,75,176 shares against 4,66,10,169 shares on offer, as per NSE data.

The category for retail individual investors received 20 per cent subscriptions while the quota for non-institutional investors subscribed three per cent. The portion for qualified institutional buyers received a three per cent subscription.

Schloss Bangalore Ltd has garnered Rs 1,575 crore from anchor investors.

The issue, with a price band of Rs 413–435 per share, will conclude on 28 May.

The company's Rs 3,500-crore IPO is a combination of a fresh issue of equity shares worth Rs 2,500 crore and an offer for sale of stocks valued at Rs 1,000 crore by promoter Project Ballet Bangalore Holdings Pvt Ltd.

It plans to use the proceeds to pay loans.

PHOTO: X

Schloss Bangalore, known for its luxurious hotels and resorts under "The Leela" brand, had a portfolio of 3,382 keys across 12 operational hotels as of May 31, 2024. Its portfolio includes The Leela Palaces, The Leela Hotels, and The Leela Resorts, located across 10 destinations in the country.

The IPO is being managed by 11 merchant bankers – JM Financial, BofA Securities India, Morgan Stanley India Company, JP Morgan India, Kotak Mahindra Capital Company, Axis Capital, Citigroup Global Markets India, IIFL Securities, ICICI Securities, Motilal Oswal Investment Advisors, and SBI Capital Markets. *—PTI*

ALCOHOL MAKERS SEEK GUARD AGAINST EU FTA MISUSE

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

The Confederation of Indian Alcoholic Beverage Companies (CIABC) has called on the Indian government to implement a gradual reduction in import duties for liquor products as part of the proposed free trade agreement (FTA) with the European Union. In a submission to the commerce ministry, the CIABC urged an initial cut in customs duty on bottled wines and spirits from the current 150 per cent to 100 per cent, with a further reduction to 50 per cent over the next decade. For bulk spirits, the industry is advocating for a reduction to 75 per cent immediately, falling to 25 per cent within ten years.

However, CIABC expressed concerns over the potential for misuse of trade concessions, particularly through trans-shipment and under-invoicing practices involving the UK. *—PTI*

Growing cement demand to fuel consolidation: Moody's

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

Growing demand for cement in India is driving significant consolidation within the sector, as larger firms move to acquire smaller regional players to expand production capacity. Moody's Ratings highlighted that in the past five years, the top ten cement producers have acquired approximately 140 million metric tonnes per annum (MMTPA) of domestic cement capacity from smaller firms, valued at around Rs 890 billion (USD 10.5 billion).

Prominent companies such as UltraTech and Ambuja are expected to continue pursuing mergers and acquisitions, particularly targeting smaller producers with weak capacity utilisation and profitability. The report noted that South India houses over 70 smaller cement producers and is thus more susceptible to consolidation compared to other regions.

With an installed capacity exceeding 200 MMTPA, South India is the largest cement-producing area, outpacing the north and east, each with capacities around 150 MMTPA. Moody's anticipates substantial cement demand growth, projecting a 6 to 7 per cent CAGR through the end of the decade, supported by housing needs and government infrastructure initiatives.

Overall, industry capacity is expected to increase by approximately 30 per cent, or 200 MMTPA, by 2030 *—PTI*

CONFIDENTIAL FILING

Groww parent firm eyes $1B from IPO

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

Billionbrains Garage Ventures, the parent company of stock broking firm Groww, has filed draft papers with Sebi for an initial public offering (IPO) through a confidential pre-filing route. The company aims to raise between USD 700 million and USD 1 billion, sources said.

The IPO is a combination of a fresh issue of equity shares and an offer for sale (OFS) component, they added.

In a public announcement on Monday, Billionbrains Garage Ventures said, "the company has filed the pre-filed draft red herring prospectus with Sebi and the stock exchanges...in relation to the proposed initial public offering of its equity shares on the main-board of the stock exchanges".

The company, which is backed by marquee investors like Peak XV, Tiger Capital, and Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella, plans to use proceeds of the IPO for investment in technology development and business expansion, said people familiar with the development.

- The company, which is backed by marquee investors like Peak XV, Tiger Capital, and Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella, plans to invest IPO proceeds in technology development

The investment platform could be valued at around USD 7 billion.

To manage the offering, Groww has appointed JP Morgan India Private Ltd, Kotak Mahindra Capital Company Ltd, Citigroup Global Markets Private Ltd, Axis Capital Ltd, and Motilal Oswal Securities Ltd.

Founded in 2016, Groww has quickly risen to become the fastest-growing retail broking platform in India in FY25, holding over 26 per cent market share as of March 2025.

During FY25, the platform added 34 lakh new accounts, with its active client base growing from 95 lakh in March 2024 to 1.29 crore in March 2025 – a 36 per cent year-on-year increase. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

India's Gurjar sets javelin record in Switzerland

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

India's para athlete Mahendra Gurjar has set a new world record in the men's javelin F42 event at the Nottwil World Para Athletics Grand Prix in Switzerland, with a throw of 61.17 metres. The 27-year-old surpassed the previous record of 59.19 metres, held by Brazil's Roberto Floriani Edenilson since 2022. Gurjar's record-breaking throw came on his third attempt, following throws of 56.11m and 55.51m. The F42 classification is for athletes with moderate movement impairment in one leg. Gurjar also won gold in the long jump T42 with a leap of 5.59 metres, making it his second gold at the event. *—PTI*

India edge Uruguay 3-2 in junior hockey

ROSARIO, 26 MAY

Kanika Siwach scored twice as the Indian junior women's hockey team edged past Uruguay 3–2 in a thrilling contest at the Four Nations Tournament on Sunday. Uruguay struck early in the 3rd minute through Milagros Seigal's penalty corner. India levelled in the second quarter when Sonam converted a penalty corner in the 21st minute. However, Agustina Mari quickly restored Uruguay's lead with another penalty corner goal in the 24th minute. India rallied in the final quarter, with Kanika Siwach netting twice—first from a penalty corner in the 46th minute, then with a field goal in the 50th—to seal the win. India will next face hosts Argentina on Tuesday in what promises to be another tough encounter. *—PTI*

India's Tejaswani shoots 25m gold in ISSF Junior WC

SUHL, 26 MAY

Indian shooter Tejaswani won gold in the women's 25m pistol event at the ISSF Junior World Cup on Monday, helping India maintain its lead in the medal tally. She scored 31 in the final to finish ahead of Belarus' Alina Nestsiarovich, 29, competing as an Individual Neutral Athlete. Hungary's Miriam Jako took bronze with 23. Tejaswani earlier placed fourth in qualification with a score of 575, while China's Taotao Zhao topped with 589 but ended fifth in the final. Other Indian shooters, Riya Shirish Thatte, Naamya Kapoor and Divanshi, finished 15th, 18th, and 24th respectively. India currently tops the table with 3 gold, 4 silver and 4 bronze medals. *—PTI*

Raza's heroics secure Lahore third PSL title

LAHORE, 26 MAY

Zimbabwe all-rounder Sikandar Raza made a triumphant arrival in Lahore just ten minutes before the toss, leading Lahore Qalandars to their third Pakistan Super League (PSL) title in four years with a thrilling six-wicket victory over Quetta Gladiators. In a nail-biting final, Quetta set a formidable target of 201 runs, but Lahore responded spectacularly, chasing down 204 runs with a ball to spare. Raza, fresh from a Test match in England, contributed an unbeaten 22 from just seven balls. Kusal Perera's explosive 62 not out off 31 balls proved crucial in the chase. Despite Quetta's promising innings, Lahore's bowlers, spearheaded by Shaheen Shah Afridi (3-24), secured the team's third PSL title, equalling Islamabad United's record. *—PTI*

RCB aims for top two finish, Lucknow for pride

RCB seek to regain momentum against unpredictable hosts

RCB stalwart Virat Kohli with LSG's South African star David 'Killer' Miller
PHOTO: X/RCB

LUCKNOW, 26 MAY

In pursuit of a top-two finish, Royal Challengers Bengaluru will need to tread with caution in their final league clash against the erratic Lucknow Super Giants on Tuesday. The hosts, Lucknow, will be desperate to sign a positive note on a largely forgettable campaign.

With Gujarat Titans' facing back-to-back defeats, third-placed RCB have a golden opportunity to secure a top-two finish for the first time since 2016.

A top two finish will five RCB two shots at the final.

They were in red-hot form before the league's 10-day pause, winning four matches on the trot. But the break appears to have disrupted their momentum.

Since the restart, Bengaluru have seen a game washed out by rain and then suffered a 42-run defeat to Sunrisers Hyderabad. "We were rusty. The intensity wasn't there initially... In the death (overs), we were bowling more accurately," stand-in captain Jitesh Sharma said after that loss.

The return of Australian pacer Josh Hazlewood has lifted spirits in the RCB camp. Hazlewood has been the team's standout performer this season, with 18 wickets in 10 matches, and currently ranks fourth among the tournament's leading wicket-takers.

However, overcoming LSG won't be easy. The hosts come in high on confidence after dismantling Gujarat Titans.

Their overseas trio of Aiden Markram, Mitchell Marsh, and Nicholas Pooran, who has been the franchise's biggest positive this season, tore through GT's bowling to pile 235/2.

The bowling unit also impressed, showing glimpses of what their campaign could have been without a string of injuries.

The margin for error for RCB will therefore be small, as a top two finish will monumentally increase their shot at the elusive title. *—PTI*

MATCH TIMINGS

RCB vs LSG
Match starts at
7.30 pm IST

Head to Head
Played : 5
RCB : 3
LSG : 2

The celebrated pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty will make a much-anticipated return
PHOTO: PTI

Satwik-Chirag team to lead India at Singapore Open

SINGAPORE, 26 MAY

The celebrated pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty will make a much-anticipated return as the duo lead a star-studded Indian team to the Singapore Open Super 750 tournament starting today.

The Indian team, which reached the semifinals of Malaysia Open and India Open earlier this year, will open against Malaysia's Choong Hon Jian and Muhammad Haikal.

Kidambi Srikanth is coming of a strong performance in Malaysia Masters, reaching the finals last week.

Other men's players are HS Prannoy, a 2023 World Championships bronze-medallist, Priyanshu Rajawat, Kiran George and Lakshya Sen.

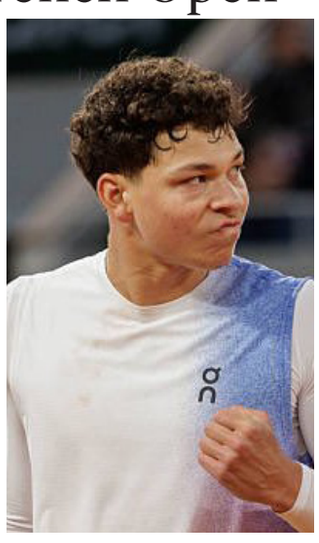
In women's singles, two-time Olympic medallist, PV Sindhu will look to regain form. The 29-year-old suffered a hamstring injury in February, forcing her to miss the Asia Team Championships. Sindhu will face Canada's Wen Yu Zhang in the first round.

Other Indian women's players include Anmol Kharb, Aakarshi Kashyap, Malvika Bansod, Rakshita Ramraj, Anupama Upadhaya and Unnati Hooda.

India's top-ranked women's doubles pair consists of Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand, while the Mixed doubles pairs consist of Dhruv Kapila/ Tanisha Crasto and Rohan Kapoor/Ruthvika Shivani Gadde. *—PTI*

Shelton triumphs in 5-set thriller at French Open

PARIS, 26 MAY



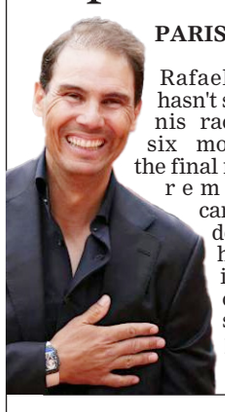
American Ben Shelton progressed to the second round of the French Open with a hard-fought victory over Italy's Lorenzo Sonego, winning 6-4, 4-6, 3-6, 6-2, 6-3 under the floodlights of Court Philippe-Chatrier. This marks Shelton's second Grand Slam win over Sonego this year, having defeated him at the Australian Open quarter-finals earlier.

Shelton, seeded 13th, celebrated his victory enthusiastically, acknowledging the electric atmosphere and his joy at playing on the iconic court for the first time. He added that he anticipated a sleepless night after the match.

Earlier, Lorenzo Musetti and Aryna Sabalenka also advanced without dropping a set, with Musetti defeating Yannick Hanfmann and Sabalenka overpowering Kamilla Rakhimova.

Iga Swiatek and Carlos Alcaraz got off to good starts in their title defenses, recording straight-set victories to reach the second round. *—PTI*

Nadal says hasn't picked up a racket in 6 months



PARIS, 26 MAY

Rafael Nadal hasn't swung a tennis racket in the six months since the final match of his remarkable career. He will do so again, he believes, if for no other reason than to prepare for exhibition matches. But for now, he is fine taking time away from the court in retirement.

"I am competitive again," he pronounced with a smile. "Just to let you know, I am enjoying my daily competitions when I play golf and when I do things, but I think in a much nicer way.... I am having fun. I don't miss much tennis, because I feel that I (gave) all what I had. I am at peace." *—PTI*

Al-Nassr's appeal boosts hopes for ACL qualification

RIYADH, 26 MAY

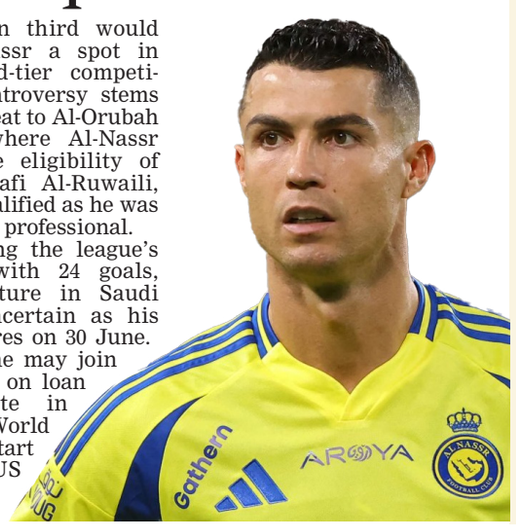
Cristiano Ronaldo's turbulent season could conclude on a high note as Al-Nassr has successfully appealed for three points, bringing them within striking distance of qualification for the Asian Champions League.

The Saudi Arabia Football Federation announced the ruling on Monday, hours before the final round of the Saudi Pro League season. Previously sitting in fourth place, the additional points elevate Al-Nassr to third and keep alive their hopes of overtaking second-place Al-Hilal.

Al-Nassr is set to face Al-Fateh, while Al-Hilal competes against Al Qadsiah.

Finishing in third would secure Al-Nassr a spot in Asia's second-tier competition. The controversy stems from a 2-1 defeat to Al-Orubah in March, where Al-Nassr contested the eligibility of goalkeeper Rafi Al-Ruwaili, deemed unqualified as he was not a full-time professional.

Despite being the league's top scorer with 24 goals, Ronaldo's future in Saudi Arabia is uncertain as his contract expires on 30 June. Reports say he may join another team on loan to participate in FIFA's Club World Cup, set to start in the US on 14 June. *—PTI*



Lewandowski scores 2 but falls short of Mbappé

Madrid, 26 May

Barcelona capped its title-winning campaign with a 3-0 victory at Athletic Bilbao on Sunday, with Robert Lewandowski scoring twice but falling short of catching Kylian Mbappé as the Spanish league's top scorer for the season. Lewandowski found the net in the 14th and 17th minutes in Bilbao to finish the league season with 27 goals, four fewer than Mbappé, who scored twice in Madrid's win against Real Sociedad.

City, Chelsea and Newcastle secure Champions League spots

Manchester, 26 May

Manchester City, Chelsea and Newcastle secured the remaining Champions League places on a dramatic final day of the Premier League season. Aston Villa and Nottingham Forest were the big losers on Sunday — missing out in the race for the top five. Villa was left with a sense of injustice after having a goal ruled out against Manchester United just moments before going behind and eventually losing

2-0. City ended the season in third place with a 2-0 win against Fulham.

Carlo Ancelotti arrives in Brazil to take over as head coach

Rio de Janeiro, 26 May

Carlo Ancelotti wore a Brazil national team cap when he arrived in Rio de Janeiro on Sunday on the eve of his formal introduction as head coach. He is the first foreigner to coach the five-time World Cup winners full-time in a century. The 65-year-old Italian will also announce his squad Monday for two South American World Cup qualifying matches next month against Ecuador and Paraguay. Ancelotti arrived hours after Samir Xaud was elected for a four-year term as President of the Brazilian Football Confederation. Sunday's election marked the end of a tumultuous process that removed Ednaldo Rodrigues as CBF president. It was Rodrigues who hired Ancelotti from Real Madrid.

QUEST FOR LAURELS

India looks to trackers for Asian C'ships

GUMI, 26 MAY

Servin Sebastian ran a personal best of 1:21:23 to win gold at the Uttarakhand National Games in February
PHOTO: ANI

The formidable Neeraj Chopra will be missing in action but the 59-strong Indian contingent would nonetheless aim for a double-digit medal haul, riding on its track athletes when the 26th Asian Athletics Championship begins today.

The Indian challenge for the men's javelin would be anchored by relatively inexperienced Sachin Yadav and Yashvir Singh.

Servin Sebastian, 25, and Amit, 21, have posted competitive times for the men's 20km race walk in the build up to the event. Sebastian ran a personal best of 1:21:23 to win golds at the Uttarakhand National Games in February and at the Indian Open Race Walking Competition in April with a 1:21:47.

The women's javelin throw is the second medal event for India. Asian Games champion Annu Rani is a strong hope. The 32-year-old has a season's best of 58.82m recorded in March in Mumbai. Her personal best and the national record, however, is 63.82m, from 2022.

Women Rupal Chaudhary, Vithya Ramraj, and men Jay Kumar and Vishal TK will be in action in the 400m heats. They are expected to do well in the 4x400 relays but have already struck controversy after a woman was dropped due to a dope violation.

Onus will also be on India's star distance runner and Asian Games medallist Gulveer Singh (men's 10,000m) to enhance medal tally. Sawan Barwal will be the other runner.

Sarvesh Anil Kushare (men's high jump qualification) and Yoonus Shah (men's 1500m heat) are also set to participate.

The Indian men's triple jump team of Praveen Chithravel and Abdulla Aboobacker (defending champion) have a shot at a podium finish.

Spotlight will also be on Avinash Sable (men's 3000m steeplechase) and Jyothi Yarraji (100m hurdles) and Parul Chaudhary (women's 3000m steeplechase). *—PTI*

Gukesh, Pragg elevate chess: World No. 2 Hikaru

STAVANGER, 26 MAY

D Gukesh and R Praggnanandhaa
PHOTO: PTI

American Grandmaster and World No. 2 Hikaru Nakamura believes strong personalities are essential for chess to grow in the Western world, which he describes as a "boring" sport for many. Speaking at Norway Chess, Nakamura praised Indian fans for their enthusiastic support of young stars like D Gukesh, R Praggnanandhaa, and Arjun Erigaisi.

"For most people, chess is a very dull game. The only way to change that is by showcasing personalities to make fans want to cheer for players," he said.

Nakamura, 37, who became the youngest American Grandmaster at 15, is well known for combining his chess career with streaming, helping him build a strong personal brand.

He feels India is well placed to capitalise on its players' personalities, with fans flocking to watch them. In contrast, Western countries such as the US and England have yet to reach that level of interest. While gadgets like heart-rate monitors add excitement, Nakamura insists there is no substitute for personality-driven initiatives to boost the game's popularity. *—PTI*